Commentary

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Culture and Capitalism
Joseph Epstein

Can American Democracy Survive?
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The Persians—A Story
Allegra Goodman

Physics vs. Metaphysics
Jeffrey Marsh

A European Wave of the Past
Angelo M. Codevilla

What Is Moral?—An Exchange
James Q. Wilson & Critics

Why a Palestinian State Is Still a Mortal Threat

David Bar-Illan

Books in Review: Edward Alexander/Richard Brookhiser/Susan Wiviott/Terry Teachout/Patrick Glynn

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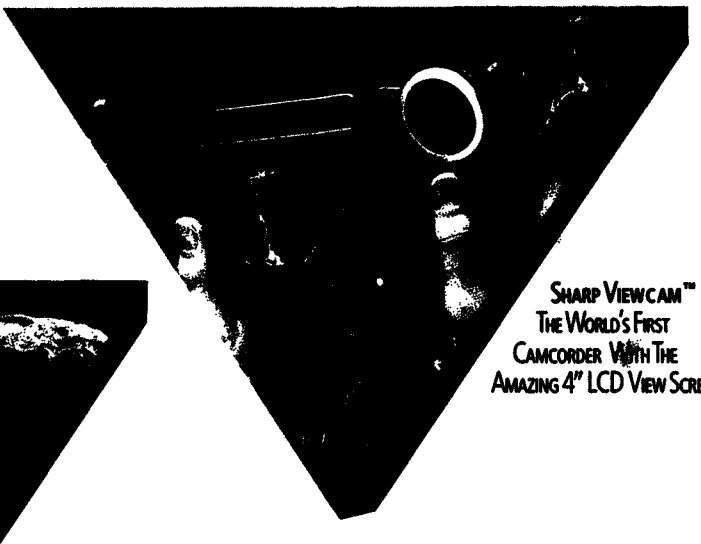

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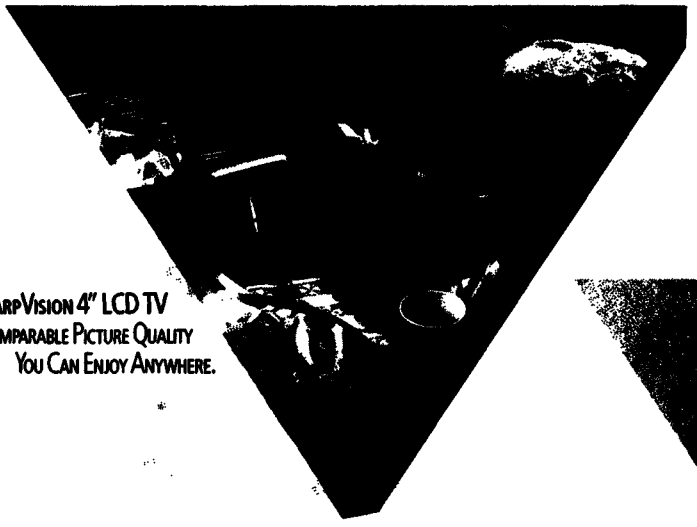

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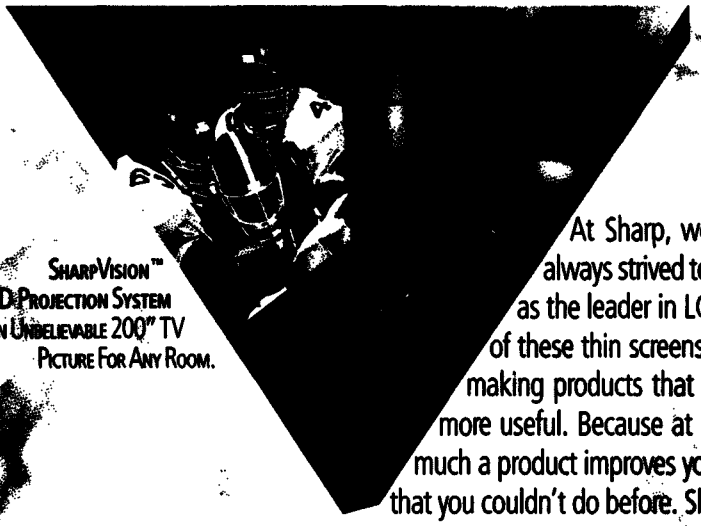

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VOLUME 96 NUMBER FIVE *NOVEMBER 1993*

Articles 27 Why a Palestinian State is Still a Mortal Threat *David Bar-Illan*

32 Culture and Capitalism *Joseph Epstein*

37 Can American Democracy Survive? *Bruce D. Porter*

Story 41 The Persians *Allegra Goodman*

Observations 48 Physics vs. Metaphysics *Jeffrey Marsh*

51 A European Wave of the Past *Angelo M. Codevilla*

Letters 2 from *Ernest van den Haag, Harry V. Jaffa, James Q. Wilson, Michael Oppenheimer, Allan Frei and Stuart Gaffin, Bernard D. Goldstein, Jeffrey Salmon, Robert McHenry, Karin McQuillan, Edward M. Siegel, Andrea Levin, Elizabeth B. Lurie, Philip J. Schiller, Richard Ryan, George Jochnowitz, David Basch, Robert Alter, Don Sharp, Christopher Caldwell, Theodore Front, Samuel Lipman,* and others

Books in Review 54 Denying the Holocaust, by Deborah Lipstadt *Edward Alexander*

56 New York Days, by Willie Morris *Richard Brookhiser*

58 Family Bonds, by Elizabeth Bartholet *Susan Wiviott*

60 Fame in the 20th Century, by Clive James *Terry Teachout*

62 Democracy Against Itself, by Jean-François Revel *Patrick Glynn*

Editor-in-Chief
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Letters from Readers

What Is Moral?

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I am afraid that James Q. Wilson's "What Is Moral, and How Do We Know It?" [June] includes an equivocation. He notes that there are universal moral dispositions and suggests that this is how we know what is moral. If this sounds circular, well. . . . Anyway, we cannot learn from these moral dispositions and sentiments what is morally right—although we do indeed have them. Mr. Wilson explains (or comes near to explaining) that we have moral dispositions because without them there could be no social life and, as he points out, there is no other life. A society that fails to discourage murder or theft by moral teaching and by legal sanctions cannot survive. Hence, societies must cultivate Mr. Wilson's moral dispositions and, contrary to his suggestion, no philosopher would deny as much.

However, "what is moral" is a different matter. This question is not answered by pointing to "moral dispositions." What reasons are there for believing that moral dispositions are morally justifiable relative to competing ones and that they embody an objective moral truth? If one believes, as I do, that moral dispositions exist and are socially necessary, one still wants to know how they are justified, shown to be right or wrong, and how they are moral, rather than just useful or necessary, as the habits of social animals are. Is murder just a *malum prohibitum* (a prohibited wrong), or also a *malum in se*, an intrinsically evil act, as driving on the wrong side of the street (*malum prohibitum*) is not? How can anything be shown to be intrinsically evil? How can murder be shown to be wrong beyond showing that people have a disposition, whether produced by "human nature" or conditioning, to believe it to be wrong? Without religion or natural law (the authority of which must rest on religion, as does that of inferences from human nature), philosophers have not succeeded in answering this question satisfactorily. It has worried them at least since Immanuel Kant's valiant attempt to refute David Hume's denial of objective morality.

The obvious existence of moral dispositions and sentiments has often been confused with their justification. The flaw in Mr. Wilson's otherwise admirable article is that it leaves the impression that he addresses the problem of morality when actually morality is irrelevant to it. Historical and psycho-social speculations cannot justify any moral disposition. It is as though one were to discuss the origin of religion (from psychological needs), or peoples' religious dispositions and sentiments, or the usefulness of religion while giving the impression of discussing the truth of religion—to which origins, dispositions, and usefulness are irrelevant.

ERNEST VAN DEN HAAG
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

James Q. Wilson's essay on morality is interesting and instructive as far as it goes. Yet it suffers from the flaw inherent in all moral argument based on finding a "natural" moral sense or "disposition." The flaw is that there is no obligation to obey a disposition. It is all very well to argue that there is a natural attachment between child and parent, from which the child "begins to develop a sense of empathy and fairness . . . ," but a sense of fairness is not the same thing as a duty to be fair.

Mr. Wilson says that we are honest "because we consider dishonesty to be a sign of wickedness." But is it wickedness or isn't it? The answer to this and similar moral questions lies in religion, not anthropology.

JOSEPH F. JOHNSTON, JR.
Alexandria, Virginia

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "What Is Moral, and How Do We Know It?," James Q. Wilson chooses "to argue for an older view of human nature, one that assumes that people are naturally endowed with certain moral sentiments." . . . Mr. Wilson's use of the term "moral sense" and kindred terms such as "moral sentiments," "moral intuitions," and "intuitively understood commitments" strengthens an initial conviction that the view in question is that of the 18th-century British moralists known as ethical intuitionists. . . . Intuitionism held that mankind was endowed with a special faculty (the moral sense) enabling it to know the difference between right and wrong, and was directed against the self-interested philosophy of Hobbes.

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Doubts with respect to Mr. Wilson's theoretical commitments, however, begin to set in almost immediately. The notion that we have knowledge of a moral order of values comparable to, but distinct from, the physical order of facts has appeared to many as strange, for it implies that "right" and "good" are really names for special value properties of things irreducible to any ordinary facts. . . . Mr. Wilson's own skepticism on this point is marked by a rejection of the fact/value distinction; the transformation of the moral sense into a mixed bag of "moral senses," including feelings, duties, and dispositions which may present competing claims; and an attempt to anchor value in empirically verifiable fact.

Mr. Wilson affirms that moral and political philosophy "must begin with a statement about human nature." But "nature" here is empirical fact, which he describes as an "affiliative drive" or "instinctive sociability" first manifested in family relations but later extended to larger units such as the clan, ethnic group, nation, etc. How does this new naturalistic view, grounded in Adam Smith's fellow feeling and reciprocal sympathy, "guide us with respect to what we must do"? That a woman, for example, wants an abortion is a factual question or statement. That she ought to obtain one is not. Similarly, Mr. Wilson admits that the affiliative drive is in fact "parochial"; that is, it is normally restricted to smaller units such as family and clan, and there are no affiliations without boundaries. How, then, can we derive the obligation to extend our drives and instincts beyond the group to humankind? . . .

Value judgments to the effect that something is good, desirable, or right are not the same as empirically verifiable statements about the world. Mr. Wilson realizes that there is a gap here, but he fills it only with a vague allusion to the need for an "enlarged sense of duty," and an appeal to an unexplained "moral reasoning" which "must take up the incomplete tasks of natural development." . . .

We expect moral theory to tell us something about what we ought to do. But Mr. Wilson does not show any interest in formulating procedures to guide us in our practical choices. To assume here that disagreement is ultimate can only give comfort to the relativist.

Toward the end of his odyssey, Mr. Wilson makes good on an earlier pronouncement that "we have looked in the wrong places for the wrong things." Confronted with the issue of whether we should construe morality as a following of certain rules and principles or as a cultivation of certain dispositions and traits, Mr. Wilson now opts for the latter and for a "virtue ethic" going back to Aristotle. It is clear that character traits such as honesty and kindness are distinct from rules and principles and involve a tendency to do certain kinds of acts in certain kinds of situations, and not just to think in certain ways. Thus we should not confuse the principle of equal treatment with the disposition to treat people equally. But it has been observed that we cannot know what traits to encourage or teach—or even how to teach them—if we do not subscribe to such principles as benevolence and justice. . . .

If Mr. Wilson is to rise above moral exhortation, he will have to justify his conclusions against the prevailing Hobbesianism of our time.

R.B. Rosthal
Greensboro, North Carolina

To the Editor of Commentary:

Because of its detached and modest tone, James Q. Wilson's "What Is Moral, and How Do We Know It?" and the book it heralds, *The Moral Sense*, may seem to be anything but apocalyptic. However, for a recent past president of the American Political Science Association to call into question the fact/value distinction has little less significance for the corporate body of American political science than for the Pope to call into question the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. Virtually all the research in 20th-century American political science has proceeded upon the assumption that there is objective knowledge of the "is" but not of the "ought." Notwithstanding the foregoing, no one has ever doubted that, if knowledge of the ought were possible, all research should be guided by that knowledge. Mr. Wilson's thesis implies that nearly all of the vast apparatus of American political science—and nearly all the vast pyramids of its publications—are little more than monuments to dead souls.

I began my first course in political science at Yale in 1935; and I reached retirement age in 1989, after teaching it since 1945. During all this time, anyone who doubted the validity of the fact/value distinction was regarded by the mainstream of our profession as a crank, if not something much worse. How much worse is indicated by the famous remark of a famous Yale professor that the two categories of persons who should never be granted tenure—two very different yet equally notorious believers in the objectivity of the "ought"—are the followers of Lenin and the followers of the political philosopher Leo Strauss.

That morality might have an objective existence, and that the distinctions between the good and the pleasant, between the noble and the base, the just and the unjust, were as knowable as the distinction between pleasure and pain, was something that had been rooted out of my mind during five years at Yale. Yet these were almost the first things I was compelled to entertain when I began studying with Leo Strauss. At the outset, I suffered all the painful consequences described by Socrates as befalling the cave dweller when first exposed to light. Later, I would suffer all the painful consequences—also described by Socrates—of a cave dweller at odds with his fellows, because he no longer looked upon the shadows on the wall as if they were reality. Let us hope that Mr. Wilson will escape the fate of a Leninist/Straussian.

James Madison, and many of the Founding Fathers, were influenced by the "moral-sense" school that flourished in 18th-century Scotland. We hear echoes of this in Abraham Lincoln. Speaking of the feelings of most white people for their subjugated fellow humans, he said—in the very idiom of Mr. Wilson—"The great majority, South as well as North, have human sympathies of which they can no more divest themselves than they can of their sensibility to physical pain." When Lincoln made this speech—in 1854—there were nearly 500,000 free blacks in the United States. Concerning these, Lincoln remarked:

> We do not see free horses or free cattle running at large. How is this? All these free blacks are the descendants of slaves, or have been slaves themselves, and they would be slaves now, but for *something* which has operated on their white owners, inducing them, at vast pecuni-

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> ary sacrifices, to liberate them. What is that *something*? Is there any mistaking it? In all these cases it is your sense of injustice, and human sympathy, continually telling you that the poor negro has some natural right to himself—that those who deny it, and make mere merchandise of him, deserve kickings, contempt, and death.

Mr. Wilson is correct in finding Aristotle at the headwaters of the tradition that sees morality as grounded in human nature. Yet the political science of the American Founding is fully consistent with its classical predecessor. There were, of course, many elements of this political science unknown to Aristotle. Separation of church and state was a solution to a problem that did not exist for him. Representation and federalism allowed for a salutary extension of the sphere of free government that he did not anticipate. But that law should be "reason unaffected by desire," and that no man should be a judge in his own cause, are ideas of natural justice that are equally classical and American. Legitimate political authority, in Aristotle's *Politics*, and in the American Declaration of Independence, is discovered in the differences among beast, man, and God. Because of these differences, no man ought to govern another man, as any man may govern a beast—or as a being as perfect as God is believed to be may govern man. Nature represents an order into which man is born, an order he does not make. The "is" of this order contains within itself the ground of the "ought" of man's moral and political existence. The two are as inseparable as the concavity and the convexity of a curved line.

Lincoln once called the great proposition of human equality enshrined in the Gettysburg Address the "father of all moral principle." On another occasion, expressing the same thought, he said, "As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master." Clearly, the underlying principle is, "Whatsoever you would that men do to you, do you unto them." Most of us regard the Golden Rule as an expression of divine wisdom, as Lincoln certainly did. But it is no less an expression of natural right, and of natural justice. To confirm this, let us ask to whom Jesus addressed this injunction. Clearly, it was not to his disciples alone, or to Jews alone, or to these with Romans added. Is it not self-evident that to be valid as a principle of right human action, it must be addressed to everyone, everywhere, and at all times? Implicit in its universality is the recognition of a universal human nature. Implicit is a recognition that, as subjects of moral obligation, "all men are created equal." Our recognition of the mutual relationship of the rights we claim for ourselves, and the duties we owe to others, is nothing more or less than a recognition of those "laws of nature and of nature's God" upon which our civilization—when it is a decent civilization—is grounded.

HARRY V. JAFFA
Center for the Study of the
Natural Law
Claremont Institute
Claremont, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

When some television commentator attempts to explain away criminal actions by claiming that what is morally wrong to us may be moral to those who come from a different society, with different mores, I resent the *apologia* as much as James Q. Wilson does, and agree with him that we all know that some actions are immoral. But we know what is right and wrong because our society, like all other societies, has developed a system of rules concerning justice, as Mr. Wilson seems to agree when he admits that moral rules "reflect the adjustment of moral sensibilities to the rules of . . . social structures and family systems." Mr. Wilson also tells us that we cannot deduce our moral values from general principles, as philosophers like Plato, Hobbes, Kant, and John Rawls have attempted to do, because "men are not born in a state of nature . . . [but] into a social compact that has long preceded them."

Why, then, does Mr. Wilson attack contemporary philosophy for its "relativism," when all that these philosophers have said is precisely what he is saying: namely, that moral values come out of a specific society, very much like language, and are therefore not universal? The reason, it seems, is that, in Mr. Wilson's view, any admission that our moral values are "relative" to our society weakens our ability to condemn crimes when those who commit them claim to belong to a different "social structure." . . .

But this belief is mistaken. . . . We can, and do, make moral judgments on the basis of our own system of values. We can do so because, as Richard Rorty has said, "we have to start from where we are," and although we inevitably attempt to "extend the reference of 'us' as far as we can," that is, convince criminals that *our* values will also benefit them (at least in the long run), there is no getting around the fact that what is beneficial is based on our values.

The same point is made in a slightly different way by Stuart Hampshire when he says that ". . . a consciousness that the rules could have been different . . . tends to reinforce the shared sense that the rules must not be broken." . . .

What philosophy can do is help us think clearly about such problems, and Mr. Wilson can help in this task by making it clear that the pragmatists (or "relativists") have a different way of justifying our moral views from the absolutists, not that they question the very "possibility of making moral judgments."

LAWRENCE HYMAN
Professor Emeritus
Brooklyn College-CUNY
Brooklyn, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

James Q. Wilson left a gaping hole in his 6,500-word treatise, namely, the complete absence of a discussion, even in passing, of the import of God and religion. Mr. Wilson might argue that this was necessary to demonstrate that, on balance, man has acted morally throughout history because man is innately pragmatic. But to ignore the possibility of the existence of God's natural law is in itself unscientific. In so doing, Mr. Wilson demonstrates a naiveté unworthy of a social scientist of his standing.

EDWARD A. DENT
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

After reading James Q. Wilson's admirable derivation of objective moral standards out of modern social science, one is compelled to note how much easier and more fruitful it is to derive such standards from common sense, as did Plato and Aristotle.

The classics' point of departure is the common-sense observation that every thing has a use for

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which it is peculiarly fit. If you doubt the wisdom of using things according to their nature, try using a Phillips screwdriver on a flathead screw. One may usefully argue about what the right function of any thing, animal, or part thereof might be. But that function is determined by what the thing *is*, and that is to be *discovered* by people rather than invented or chosen as a "value" *à la* Auguste Comte, Max Weber, or *People* magazine. The nature of man, the best use that we can make of our brief lives, is to live in a most peculiarly human way.

The first step in figuring out what that might be is to demolish the notion that it consists of maximizing one's power to choose. Plato does that in the first book of *The Republic* by reminding us that we all make mistakes, are intemperate, and so on. The all-powerful tyrant, he shows, is not a happy man, in part because his unusual temptation to think that happiness is doing whatever he wants leads him to choose an unusual number of things that are not conducive to human happiness. Philosophy, the elaboration of common sense, leads us to detailed knowledge of what we should do with ourselves. Mere opinion? Hardly. For example, the judgment that anal intercourse is unnatural is founded on knowledge of consequences far more serious than using the wrong screwdriver.

Reflection untrammeled by social science also leads to the conclusion that divine standards are anything but arbitrary and that they, too, are reliable guides to human nature. Suppose that Moses had come down from Mount Sinai with commandments like:

> Thou shalt have many gods, and take their name in vain. Thou shalt not observe any Sabbath, lest you reflect on your origins. Dishonor your father and your mother. Kill. Steal. Copulate at will. Speak without regard to the truth. Covet your neighbor's goods and mate.

Or suppose that the stone tablets had said:

> Regarding the sacred, the family, life, property, sex, truth, and desire, there is only one commandment. No choice is inherently better than any other.

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The Background of the Boycott. The Arab states try to make the world believe that their hostility toward Israel is based on Israel's "occupation" of "Arab lands", which came under Israeli administration as a result of the 1967 Six-Day War. But the Arab boycott of Israel goes back even further—to 1946, two years before the state of Israel even existed.

How the Boycott works. The boycott works on several levels. The *primary boycott* prohibits Arab people and Arab states to do any business—with and in Israel. The *secondary boycott* attempts to prevent businesses anywhere in the world from any economic activity with Israel and threatening them with economic retaliation if they do not conform. It is a very potent weapon, since most countries and most businesses are well aware that the large Arab market and its enormous oil wealth make it most unattractive to get into the bad graces of the Arabs. Little consideration is given to the fact that the boycott is a gross violation of international law. The U.S. is the one shining exception to the almost universal acceptance of this economic blackmail. There is also the *tertiary boycott* that punishes firms that deal with blacklisted businesses. And perhaps the most damaging aspect is the so-called "*voluntary boycott*", by which companies, and in some cases entire countries, refrain pre-emptively from doing business with Israel in order to avoid retaliation by the Arabs.

> "The Arab boycott is undisguised economic warfare against the state of Israel. It is totally unrelated to any territorial dispute the Arabs may have with Israel."

The boycott also applies to international shipping, aviation and tourism: Most ships and airplanes calling on Israel are barred from Arab ports; airplanes enroute to and from Israel cannot overfly Arab countries. Israelis or any travelers with Israeli visas in their passports may not enter most Arab countries.

The Arab Boycott Office maintains a blacklist, which at last count included over 6,300 entries in 96 countries. In the United States alone, over 12,000 firms each year receive requests from Arab firms for boycott compliance. In Europe and Asia, where, in contrast to the United States, boycott compliance is usually legal, the numbers are probably much higher.

The Cost of the Boycott to Israel. The primary damage of the boycott to the Israeli economy is that it prevents or considerably hampers investments in the country. That loss is estimated to be on the order of $500 to $600 million per year. The loss of potential trade with the Arab countries alone is on the order of over $500 million per year. Because of the boycott, Israel's commercial exports are at least 10% less than they would otherwise be—a loss of about $1.2 billion per year!

The Arab boycott is undisguised economic warfare against Israel. The boycott is totally unrelated to any territorial dispute the Arabs may have with Israel, since the boycott started over twenty years before any such territories came under Israeli administration. Its purpose is the strangulation of Israel—to achieve by economic means what the Arabs, despite many tries, have been unable to achieve by military means. But the greatest losers of the boycott may well be the Arabs themselves. Blinded by their hatred of Israel they have prevented the Middle East from becoming an area of growth and prosperity exceeding even the Asian Pacific Rim countries. Rescinding the almost 50-year old boycott would be an encouraging signal to the world and to the Israeli public. Their not bringing even such a gesture does give a clue that the intentions of the Arabs are not peaceful and that Israel is justified in proceeding with greatest caution in any peace negotiations.

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driven by an overriding concern for self-preservation as "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." But lives lived according to the above-mentioned anti-decalogues would be infinitely more miserable: these rules would devalue reverence, reduce thought to cunning, abolish the possibility of objective speech, atomize families, as well as put life, property, and sexual favor at the mercy of power. They seem a bit too harsh for lions, never mind baboons. The Ten Commandments, by contrast, foster attitudes and behavior peculiarly fit to our happiness because they encourage us to act according to our nature.

What about peoples who live by other standards? Recognizing differences does not doom us to relativism. Barbarians, Aristotle noted, confuse woman and slave because both are weak. Because they do not recognize that the source of freedom is virtue rather than strength, barbarians are themselves incapable of freedom. Standards are always based on imperfect perceptions of our nature. Some are more imperfect than others.

This sort of discourse is indigestible to those raised on social science, and Mr. Wilson is to be commended for making it possible for them to swallow the basic truth that not all human affairs are subject to indifferent choice. There is nothing wrong with minimalist music—but it's a long way from Johann Sebastian Bach.

ANGELO M. CODEVILLA
Hoover Institution
Stanford University
Stanford, California

JAMES Q. WILSON writes:

In different words but in the same spirit, Ernest van den Haag, Joseph Johnston, Jr., and R.B. Rosthal all take me to task for ignoring the fact that there is no objective principle by which one can prove that there is an obligation to obey a moral sentiment. "What reasons are there for believing," Mr. van den Haag asks, "that moral dispositions are morally justifiable relative to competing ones and that they embody an objective moral truth?" Or, as Mr. Rosthal puts it, "value judgments" are "not the same as empirically verifiable statements about the world."

That all offer the same criticism in much the same language shows how powerful has been the influence of logical positivism on Western thought. Positivism had its origins in David Hume's famous passage in which he pointed out the great difference between saying that something *is* the case and saying that it *ought* to be the case. After Kant's spectacular failure to resolve this problem, it was only a matter of time until a philosopher such as A.J. Ayer could describe all "value statements" as mere "ejaculations."

A full response to this argument would take not merely a magazine essay, and not even a book, but a lifetime of work. In the book, *The Moral Sense*, from which COMMENTARY extracted my essay, I offer the beginnings of a response; for another response, I commend to my critics the letter from Harry V. Jaffa. In the meantime, let me suggest the following.

Hume believed that the distinction between vice and virtue is not discoverable by scientific reason. In the very next paragraph, entitled "Moral distinctions derived from a moral sense," he set out to discover a sounder basis for that distinction. In doing so, he did not suppose that virtue would lose its power to command because it was no longer equivalent to a logical tautology or a scientific law. Though he flirted for a while with the view that the moral sense is no different from what later utilitarians called pleasure and what my critics call "values," Hume was far too thoughtful to remain content with so narrow and mischievous a position. Within twenty pages he is busily showing us that men form society and make rules for its governance in part because of "the natural affection, which they bear their children." And this natural affection, and the care it implies, is a "duty."

It is obvious that Hume, however radical his challenge to what he called "vulgar systems of morality," was not inclined to divide all knowledge into two parts—scientific reason and personal preference. The "natural sentiment of benevolence," evident in the care we give our children and the blame we visit on those who abuse or neglect their children, is deeply rooted in almost all mankind, so much so that "without entirely confounding the human mind by disease or madness, 'tis impossible to extirpate and destroy" it. In addition to analytical reason and pleasure-conferring tastes, we have sentiments that commend certain elemental acts to us and that are natural in the sense that they are both nearly universal and powerfully demanding. Hume did not think that all virtues were natural in this sense (oddly, he thought a desire for justice was purely utilitarian), but he thought that many were.

I venture that Messrs. van den Haag, Johnston, and Rosthal think so, too. If they were to see a man laughing while torturing a baby to death, would they pause to wonder if there were any logical, empirical, or scientific grounds for their objecting to this behavior? If Lawrence Hyman were to find a culture in which infant torture was commonplace, would he tell us that we were free to judge it, but that we could do so on the basis of nothing stronger than "our system of values"? If someone should propose landing an army in that country for the purpose of putting an end to baby torture, would my critics object on the grounds that the army would only be imposing our values on a culture with different values? But if they approved of the invasion, what grounds would they offer for it? And if someone in the United Nations were to object that their reasons reflected parochial Western culture, what rejoinder might they make?

It is clear that a moral sentiment cannot be proved in the same way that we prove the effects of gravity. I do not think that human reason consists solely of two faculties, the first the capacity for understanding a mathematical equality or observing a needle on a scientific instrument and the second an undifferentiated realm of preferences, values, and myths. My book is an effort to disaggregate the second category and to show that some sentiments are universally regarded as more worthy and compelling than others. I suspect that my critics agree with me in practice if not in theory. The test would be this: propose to them any ethical theory one can imagine—utilitarianism, Kantian rationalism, or the Ten Commandments—and observe their reaction. My bet is that they will find some fault with each, and demonstrate the fault by showing that the strict application of the theory would lead one to endorse some actions that are "obviously" (intuitively) objectionable on moral grounds. If I win that bet, I then turn the burden of proof over to them: on what grounds

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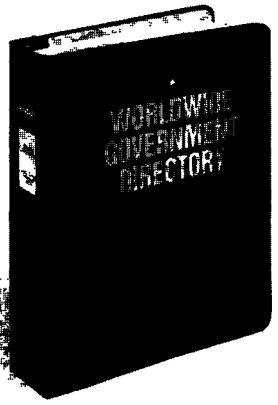

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does one say that a given outcome is "obviously" wrong?

Edward A. Dent tasks me for relying on science and neglecting God; Angelo M. Codevilla thinks that common sense makes science (and by implication, religion) unnecessary to moral argumentation. To the former I say that there is little in human history to suggest that religion is essential to morality; to the latter I acknowledge that good science is often only a marginal improvement over common sense. To both I observe the remarkable congruence that exists among the ethical implications of the great religions, the best of modern science, and the teachings of disinterested common sense. Hillel summarized it in words that are surely familiar to readers of this magazine: do not do to another what is hateful to you; all the rest is commentary.

Global Warming

To the Editor of Commentary:

In "Greenhouse Anxiety" [July], Jeffrey Salmon argues that many scientists have wildly exaggerated the threat posed by global warming, thereby stirring disproportionate concern among policy-makers and providing fodder for environmentalists who are supposedly hellbent on slashing fossil-fuel use at any cost. But the fragmentary picture of global-warming science he presents is extremely misleading. His dismissive attitude on the wisdom of actions to mitigate greenhouse-gas emissions contrasts sharply with independent multidisciplinary assessments.

Mr. Salmon cites cautionary statements from Frank Press, president of the National Academy of Sciences, and Robert White, president of the National Academy of Engineering. But he fails to note that both signed a letter to the then-President-elect George Bush in 1988 which opened with the following sentence: "The problem of global environmental change is now widely recognized as one of growing urgency that will require responses by your administration." The letter called for efforts to reduce reliance on fossil fuels. Mr. Salmon also fails to mention that the National Academy of Sciences elaborated on these concerns in its 1991 report, *Policy Implications of Greenhouse Warming*. The most comprehensive multidisciplinary assessment of global warming to date, this report was produced by a panel chaired by Daniel J. Evans, former Republican governor of Washington, and included, among others, Robert A. Frosch, vice president of General Motors Research Laboratories; William D. Nordhaus, professor of economics at Yale; and Sir Crispin Tickell, former UN ambassador from the United Kingdom. These people are not screaming radicals of the environmental movement; nor are they ivory-tower scientists without a notion of the practical implications of their proposals.

Among the report's conclusions were that "despite the great uncertainties, greenhouse warming is a potential threat sufficient to justify action now." The panel also concluded that "substantial mitigation [of emissions] can be accomplished at a modest cost. In other words, insurance [against undesirable levels of warming] is cheap."

Mr. Salmon's discussion of technical points is also selective to the point of inaccuracy. Global-warming concerns are soundly based on a variety of findings; comparison of the warming of the past 100 years with the predictions of global-circulation models is only one type of evidence, and not a very useful one, as I will explain.

Among the outcomes that the greenhouse-gas theory reproduces with considerable success are the amount of cooling which occurred between the end of the dinosaur age (about 65 million years ago) and today, and the amount of warming which occurred as the last ice age ended (comparable to the warming expected over the coming century). Both shifts were accompanied by large natural swings in the amount of carbon dioxide (CO_2) in the atmosphere and both were characterized by a degree of global-temperature change reproduced by the theory. From an ecological viewpoint, both climate changes also remade the face of the earth. Unmitigated greenhouse warming, which is expected to increase global temperature by 3°-8°F over the next century, would do the same.

Mr. Salmon's discussion of the 100-year trend is itself akin to criticizing Newton's theory of gravity because a feather floats downward rather than plummeting; there are many factors at work in both cases which make the particular example a complex and insufficient one for testing the theory.

In the case of the feather, it is the resistance of air which complicates matters. In the case of the 100-year temperature change and its temporal and geographic pattern, it is small solar fluctuations, random climate variations, a lag in warming caused by the thermal inertia of the oceans, and the reflective power of particles released by coal-burning which obscure the underlying greenhouse warming.

In the case of gravity, replacing the feather with a stone reduces the complication of air resistance to negligible levels. In the case of global warming, the greenhouse effect will come to dominate the complicating factors in relative importance as the level of greenhouse gases swells in the future. In any case, recent attempts to account for these complicating factors bring the greenhouse-model predictions into reasonable agreement with the observed global trend.

Finally, scientific results published this year have added a new cause for concern. Analyses of samples of ancient air trapped in ice cores taken from the Greenland ice cap indicate that the past 10,000 years, the period when civilization developed, have been a climatic oddity. Climate has been anomalously stable, with global temperature variations of only about 2°F up or down. In earlier times, climate in the North Atlantic area in particular oscillated wildly. Pumping up the greenhouse gases, which are known to be an important factor in controlling climate, could terminate this stability. If "insurance is cheap" in guarding against such an outcome, why not start buying some now by reducing emissions?

Michael Oppenheimer
Environmental Defense Fund
New York City

To the Editor of Commentary:

Jeffrey Salmon claims that measures to mitigate human-induced climate change are unnecessary. This is a fallacious argument. Mr. Salmon severely misrepresents the views of environmentally concerned people, the major points of the arguments, and the very nature of the debate itself. He belittles the importance of the climate system, upon which all life is dependent, by grouping it with all other environmental problems, and he ignores a wealth of evi-

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dence to indicate that mitigative measures are called for.

Mr. Salmon clouds the issue by labeling as "advocates" those with viewpoints opposed to his, portraying them as a homogeneous group, and then attributing the most extreme language to them. He lambastes "scientists who have lent their authority" to ideas that he describes in outrageous phrases like "uncontrollable temperature rise," "catastrophic," "apocalypse," and "an earth on fire," when the overwhelming majority of scientists would never use such terminology. He goes so far as to claim that scientists have "collaborated *in gross distortions" only for the* personal gain to be had from publicity. In fact, perhaps the worst thing a scientist could hope for is to get vast publicity for an idea that is later proved wrong (e.g., the cold-fusion fiasco).

Policy-making on environmental issues is difficult. It almost always involves working with incomplete information. Policy-makers, however, are compelled to provide convincing information and demonstrate detailed knowledge to justify policy. Mr. Salmon muddles the debate by failing to present complete information and to distinguish, when possible, between scientific and policy issues.

For example, the same basic information about Lyme disease is available to all. . . . Some parents may allow their children to play outdoors unrestrained; others may require their children to wear long pants and sleeves; still others may bar their children from playing outdoors altogether. Can any scientist predict the number of ticks that will appear in a particular backyard? No. Is it possible to find scientists who disagree about the magnitude of the potential risk? Probably. Does the fact of incomplete information and disagreement among scientists mean that there is no problem? No. Does it mean that scientists who voice concern are purposely misleading and scaring the public? Of course not. As with global environmental issues, the decision as to what action to take in the face of incomplete information is a policy debate, not a scientific one.

Mr. Salmon ignores much relevant information. He claims that "*every* [his emphasis] greenhouse forecast . . . is the result of computers attempting to model" the climate system, and bases much of his argument on attacking the reliability of the climate models. He refuses to acknowledge the extent to which the models have been validated. Additionally, he completely ignores geologic data unrelated to climate models that support the link between greenhouse gases and climate.

Ice cores drilled in Greenland and Antarctica provide clues about the earth's environment for a period of more than 150,000 years. Carbon dioxide and methane concentrations parallel temperature fluctuations associated with the ice ages, with increased greenhouse gases corresponding to warmer climates. Currently, results are beginning to be published from the two newest ice cores drilled in Greenland. They reveal that past climate fluctuations occurred even more swiftly than was believed possible during interglacial (non-ice-age) periods (changes of up to 10°C in one to two decades). The implication is that rapid climate fluctuations could occur again, perhaps during our lifetime. Results published so far indicate that at least one greenhouse gas, methane, was involved.

On even longer time scales there is remarkable consistency between theoretical calculations and data. Evidence and theory indicate that glacial periods as ancient as 300 million years ago occurred during times of low CO_2. Warmer periods such as the Cretaceous (135-65 million years ago) correspond to higher CO_2. The only period for which conflicting data exist is the late Ordovician (about 440 million years ago). These periods during which the earth's landscape was profoundly different from our own—mile-thick ice sheets covering much of North America, or large dinosaurs and lush vegetation even in polar regions—correspond to greenhouse-gas changes similar in magnitude to that predicted with continued fossil-fuel use. This is basic evidence, ignored by Mr. Salmon, of the power of trace gases to affect climate.

If greenhouse gases have been so closely tied to climate in the past, there is every reason to believe that the same will be true in the future. If the opposite were true, and past climates bore no relation to greenhouse gases, the theory would be largely refuted. Geological evidence reflects actual conditions, and therefore includes all climate-change mechanisms such as the response of clouds. Our inadequate knowledge of many processes does not affect this result: if the data indicate strong correlations between greenhouse gases and climate fluctuations, then the correlation is true regardless of whether cloudiness increased or decreased.

Regarding global temperature changes over the last century, Mr. Salmon contends that the cooling which occurred from the mid-1940's to the 1960's contradicts the enhanced greenhouse theory. That is not true. All scientists who have attempted to simulate these changes, including James Hansen and Stephen Schneider, who are specifically criticized by Mr. Salmon, clearly acknowledge that such short-term fluctuations are attributable to other major climate forces such as solar cycles and volcanic dust. In other words, we know that many factors affect the climate; a perfect correlation with CO_2 is not expected. . . .

A balanced presentation of the issues would have better served COMMENTARY's readership. . . .

ALLAN FREI
Department of Geography
Rutgers University
New Brunswick, New Jersey

STUART GAFFIN
Environmental Defense Fund
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Scientist-bashing can be highly entertaining fiction. As in Michael Crichton's *Jurassic Park*, Jeffrey Salmon, in "Greenhouse Anxiety," has peopled his world with scientists who are willing to play fast and loose with facts in order to cater to their own twisted egos.

Mr. Salmon accuses scientists of panicking the public on global warming to further their own goals. . . . [But] the basic premise of a global-climate effect from human activities is supported by a large body of literature extending over decades.

He goes out of his way to impugn the scientific credibility of those who are concerned about global warming. Yet he fails the basic test of journalistic credibility by neglecting to present many of those aspects of the global-warming scenario that give scientists and physicians the greatest concern. He tells us all about natural cycles in the earth's temperature, but leaves out the salient fact that the

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mid-range projection of the rate of warming of the biosphere appears to be unprecedented in the human history of this planet. Nor, obviously, has any such change in climate occurred when the earth has had as many human inhabitants or the current burden of ecological insults.

Mr. Salmon also omits any mention of the slow reversibility of any effect. While some scientists may predict that greenhouse gases will have only a small effect on the earth's climate, few, if any, will disagree with the statement that it would take a period of perhaps decades to reverse the effects on the earth's biosphere of any warming that might occur. Thus, Mr. Salmon is misleading when he tells us that waiting five years will only increase the temperature at most one-tenth of a degree, but tells us nothing about how much time it will take to reverse the problems caused by this rise.

As a scientist, I am skeptical about theories that have yet to be validated by experience or of theories that are developed to explain events after the fact. In the sweltering heat of . . . yet another record hot summer, I suggest to Mr. Salmon that he ought to take more seriously the longstanding scientific prediction of a global-warming effect due to human activities.

BERNARD D. GOLDSTEIN, M.D.
Director, Environmental and
Occupational Health and
Sciences Institute
Piscataway, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Jeffrey Salmon's "Greenhouse Anxiety" is a strong and effective article. But perhaps because of its brevity, Mr. Salmon does not discuss a number of related issues.

• What ever happened to nuclear winter? Not very long ago we were being told that because of nuclear testing the world was already doomed to an extended period of reduced sunlight, falling temperatures, and a generally mean existence. I do not recall reading any apology from any environmentalist saying, "We were simply in error." For that matter, why should we be worrying about the effects of fossil fuels when we were assured not long ago that by now we would have run out of fossil fuels, or certainly be on the verge of running out?

• Paul Ehrlich remains a chief guru of the environmental movement. In his book, *The Population Bomb*, written in 1968, he maintained that despite any crash programs then adopted, millions and millions of people around the world would be starving by the 1970's. There was some starvation, but that was due to oppression, civil wars, ethnic conflicts, or infrastructure problems. Clearly, the world has the capacity to produce enough food for everyone on earth into the near future, even with population growth.

• Other issues could have been cited, including the errors in prediction of the movement's patron saint, Rachel Carson.

The record is rather clear: of all the recent political forces and movements, the environmentalists have been the most consistently and totally incorrect. For better or worse, it appears that our planet will be with us, and in relatively good shape, for a long time.

DONALD FELDSTEIN
Teaneck, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Jeffrey Salmon . . . provides a clear and convincing overview of some of the most important distortions that have dominated public discussion of the greenhouse effect. While its central question, "How did this happen?," may seem of merely academic interest when nations of the world are committing themselves to ever-more-ambitious programs to meet the "threat" of global warming, in fact it cuts to the heart of the problems we will face over the next decades, should these policies be implemented.

For if Mr. Salmon and thoughtful critics like him are correct about the unlikelihood of significant warming, the policies will be "successful"; that is, the warming "predicted" by the computer models will not occur. Never mind that we will have expended vast resources to address a non-problem, and behaved like the man in midtown Manhattan who constantly whistles to keep the elephants away. The "men of courage" will no longer be those who spoke of what might be, but those who apparently averted what might have been.

Such an outcome can only be devastating for the integrity of science, given the compromised position too many scientists have already put themselves in with regard to global warming. On this point Mr. Salmon is perhaps too charitable. What is noteworthy is not that a few "experts" seek fame and fortune by creating this issue, or that politicians eager for a cause allow themselves to be misled, but that so many serious researchers remain silent in the face of distortions such as the ones Mr. Salmon documents. While they no doubt have better things to do than appear on TV and sign "anti-greenhouse" statements, it would be no surprise if many of these researchers took a wait-and-see attitude toward the political campaign of their more notorious colleagues. After all, the publicity has already brought more dollars and vastly more prestige to a relatively neglected scientific speciality.

Thus, the greatest risk of "greenhouse anxiety" is that it will teach scientists the same lesson (but with higher stakes) that their trendy academic colleagues in the humanities and social sciences are busy dispensing: the search for truth means nothing, and a grab for power everything.

CHARLES T. RUBIN
Duquesne University
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

JEFFREY SALMON writes:

In my article I argued that there is no solid evidence to support the theory that the earth is warming because of man-made greenhouse gases. Michael Oppenheimer and Allan Frei and Stuart Gaffin say the proof of the greenhouse theory is to be found in the record of ancient climates, preserved in bubbles of air trapped in thick sheets of ice in Greenland and Antarctica. The ice records go back more than 150,000 years and show a clear connection between changes in carbon dioxide and changes in temperature. When CO_2 goes up, the earth's temperature increases; when $C0_2$ goes down, the earth's temperature falls.

But my critics fail to mention an important fact. They would have the reader believe that CO_2 caused the temperature change, but the evidence suggests that the temperature changed first and the CO_2 changed roughly 1,000 years later. Since temperature shifts precede CO_2 changes, CO_2 cannot be the *cause* either of rising or falling temperatures. In fact, the reverse seems to be true: the CO_2 changes may be the *effect* of temperature changes; when the earth's temperature rises the oceans must give

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up some of their dissolved CO_2 to the atmosphere, just as a bottle of soda loses some of its fizz when warmed. By itself, then, the correlation between rising CO_2 and rising temperature in the record of the earth's climate provides no evidence at all of a greenhouse effect.

This turns out to be true also for the recent changes in CO_2 and temperature. Scientists at Bell Laboratories have carefully compared the month-by-month changes in CO_2 and temperature since the 1950's, and find that the temperature changes occur first and the CO_2 changes occur about five months later.

Along with Mr. Oppenheimer, Messrs. Frei and Gaffin also argue that these ice cores reveal that dramatic temperature swings are possible, and that these wild swings are accompanied by leaps in the amount of atmospheric CO_2. "Pumping up the greenhouse gases," Mr. Oppenheimer says, might "terminate" our current stable climate system. But since the ice-core data show that CO_2 levels shift *after* the climate changes, this appeal to evidence from "ancient air trapped in ice cores" is meaningless.

Messrs. Frei and Gaffin say I "refuse to acknowledge the extent to which the [computer] models have been validated," but fail to offer a single example of that validation. In fact, the computer models strike out on almost every important point. The models predict that, in response to the accumulated greenhouse gases in the atmosphere in the last 100 years, the temperature of the earth should already have risen by at least one degree. And they predict, further, that the Northern Hemisphere should have warmed more than the Southern Hemisphere; that the U.S. should have warmed more than the Northern Hemisphere as a whole; and that high latitudes—especially the Arctic zone—should have warmed most of all. Not a single one of these predictions has been borne out by temperature measurements.

Messrs. Frei and Gaffin object to my relying on the measurements of what the earth actually did in the last 100 years as a basis for judging the greenhouse theory. They state that the 1940's-1960's cooling period does not contradict the theory that rising levels of CO_2 cause global warming because this chill could be explained by "other major climate changes such as solar cycles and volcanic dust." How convenient. If other factors, such as solar cycles, can cause the temperature to go down, they can also cause the temperature to go up. In other words, there is no reason to connect even the modest half-degree of warming over the last 100 years with the greenhouse effect. Yet in James Hansen's congressional testimony in 1988, he used that half-degree of warming to support his claim that a man-made greenhouse effect had already set in. He did not mention that natural causes of warming, like the sun, might be responsible, and that the greenhouse effect might be a negligible factor.

Mr. Oppenheimer argues that my dismissive attitude toward policies to cut CO_2 emissions "contrasts sharply with independent multidisciplinary assessments" such as the one published by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS). Here are two sentences from the NAS study:

> Neither the available climate record nor the limited capabilities of the climate models permit a reliable forecast of the implications of continued accumulations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Neither do they permit an assessment as to whether the increase from 1890 to 1990 in global average temperatures can be attributed to greenhouse gases.

There could be no clearer confirmation of my conclusion.

Messrs. Frei and Gaffin claim that when referring to global warming the "overwhelming majority" of scientists would never use the extreme language I attribute to them, such as "catastrophic." As I noted in my article, 700 members of the National Academy of Sciences signed a statement sponsored by the Union of Concerned Scientists warning that burning fossil fuels could cause a 9°F temperature rise which "could have *catastrophic* consequences for climate. . . ." And the first line of the prologue to Michael Oppenheimer's global-warming book, *Dead Heat*, reads: "Humanity is hurtling toward a precipice." "Catastrophic" and "hurtling toward a precipice" are pretty strong language.

Bernard D. Goldstein asserts that I "fail the basic test of jour-

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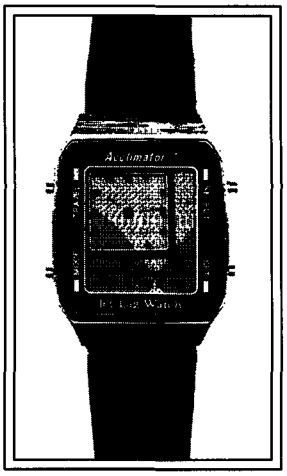

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nalistic credibility" by omitting important parts of the global-warming argument, in particular "the salient fact that the mid-range projection of the rate of warming of the biosphere appears to be unprecedented" in human history. Far from failing to present this fact, *I made it the main point of my article.* It is true that the projections of warming are unprecedented, but the observed temperature rise is nil. Precise satellite measurements of global temperature show that there has been no more than a few hundredths of a degree of warming in the last fifteen years, but the computer projections indicate that the earth's temperature should have risen by a substantial fraction of a degree during this period.

Finally, Dr. Goldstein thinks that this year's sweltering summer should make me take global warming more seriously. Pointing to one summer's warm spell as an indication of the horrors of the greenhouse effect is one of the shallowest arguments in the environmentalists' lexicon. I will assume Dr. Goldstein was smiling when he wrote that sentence.

I am grateful for the letters of Donald Feldstein and Charles T. Rubin. Mr. Feldstein raises an important question about the intellectual honesty of the environmental movement. His examples—nuclear winter and population growth—indicate the ways the movement reacts when the facts go against it. One method, which was used in the nuclear-winter saga, is to forget the problem and move on to more fertile soil. Global cooling gave way to nuclear winter, which in turn gave way to global warming, which may in time give way to a new horror.

Mr. Rubin's comment on scientific integrity goes to the core of the political issues discussed in my article. Only the members of the scientific community have the knowledge and credibility to challenge the politicized science that is now commonplace in the environmental arena. But the scientific community has been largely silent—a silence Mr. Rubin attributes to the fact that dollars follow eco-alarms and no one wants to ruin someone's research funding. Yet the consequence of this silent complicity in the promotion of bad science is that one day scientists may be held in the same regard as lawyers.

A possible solution, suggested by Mr. Rubin himself in other writings, is to diversify sources of funding. Our government now spends over $1 billion a year on greenhouse and climate-change research. With that amount of government funding pouring into this one field of research, it is no wonder that the science of climate change has been politicized.

The Encyclopedias

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Forty-odd years ago a critic created a bit of a stir by charging that the editors of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* had permitted authorities of the Roman Catholic Church to vet certain articles bearing on the history and doctrines of the Church. In a day when anti-Catholic bigotry was still fashionable in some circles, this was meant to be a sensational accusation, and it did indeed carry the potential for harm. Had there been any truth to it, it might have been of some effect.

Today we tend to think of that critic's notions as merely odd, and, perhaps a bit perversely, we actually treasure our one copy of his pamphlet in our archives. Such is the mellowing effect of 40-odd years. Now comes Andrea Levin [Israel Watch: "The Encyclopedias," July] to remind us that partial and interested criticism has not disappeared, is still a blood sport, and still enjoys the enormous tactical advantage of the first strike. She reminds us, too, that the interested critic can find no more inviting prey than a general encyclopedia, for there is bound to be something there that can be bent to make the point the critic has set out to make. In reaching that predestined conclusion the critic need only be prepared to ignore all contradictory evidence and countering argument.

Ironically, the first fact to be ignored is that what is under "review" is an encyclopedia, not a monograph. An encyclopedia is not a single work, or even a simple collection of works. It is, if properly made, an integrated assembly of parts that supplement one another. From Mrs. Levin's comments a reader might never suspect that, for example, there is in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* an article titled "Israel." The reader is instead encouraged to infer that what is in the article "Palestine" is all that *Britannica* has to say on the matter.

Thus, when Mrs. Levin has temporarily exhausted her stock of mere rhetoric and *ad-hominem* attack—four paragraphs into her commentary on *Britannica*—and she gets around to citing a particular, it is the failure of the article to mention explicitly that the San Remo Conference endorsed the Balfour Declaration. Although I could argue that the endorsement is clearly implicit in the discussion, the point I make here is a simpler one. In the article "Israel" appears the following sentence:

> [The Balfour Declaration] was endorsed by the principal Allied powers, and through its acceptance by the Conference of San Remo in 1920, it became an instrument of British and international policy.

Similarly, Mrs. Levin asserts that the article "Palestine" fails properly to characterize the Mufti of Jerusalem, Amin al-Husayni. But in "Israel" we are told that he first emerged as a leader of the Arab cause in the course of the "large-scale attacks upon Jews by Arabs" in 1929, that the formation of his Arab High Committee "was followed by a renewal of Arab attacks on the Jews, soon developing into open war," and that in 1937 "the publication of the Peel report was followed by renewed Arab terrorism and violence," whereupon the Mufti fled to Syria. And just for good measure, yet another article in *Britannica*, to which the Index will direct any curious reader, discusses the anti-Jewish violence that "exploded . . . with the encouragement of Amin al-Husayni, Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and admirer of the Nazis."

One more example: Mrs. Levin complains that "Palestine" fails to offer "a hint of Arab aggression" as a cause of the Six-Day War. But in "Israel" we read that ". . . the direct causes of the Six-Day War of June 1967 were Egypt's provocations directed against Israel." And in still another article, titled "Arab-Israeli Wars," the origin of the Six-Day War is related thus:

> In early 1967 Syrian bombardments of Israeli villages had been intensified. When the Israeli Air Force shot down six Syrian MiG planes in reprisal, Nasser mobilized his forces near the Sinai border.

Sometimes the work of the interested critic is harder; some-

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times he or she must ignore what is right before the eyes. Mrs. Levin says: "The creation of the PLO in 1964 is said to aim at the 'total liberation of Palestine,' with no mention of the violence enshrined in its founding charter." Here is what the article "Palestine" actually says:

> The guerrilla organizations rejected any political settlement that did not include the total liberation of Palestine and the return of the refugees to their homeland, which was to be achieved through armed struggle.

Mrs. Levin says: "In general, the bloody history of the PLO is mostly concealed." She then notes reference to an airplane hijacking, of which the article says:

> . . . [T]he PFLP hijacked to a Jordanian airstrip three airliners . . . with more than 300 people aboard. PFLP representatives threatened to destroy the aircraft, with the passengers aboard, unless. . . .

Terror, surely, even if in this case no blood. Then comes the coastal-road massacre of 1978. Mrs. Levin implies that the event is mentioned only in briefest passing and that it is she who supplies the telling detail that there were more than 100 Israeli casualties. But the article says: "Palestinian guerrillas raided Israel, leaving 37 dead and 82 wounded."

In separate articles on various Palestinian groups, other such events, including the Munich massacre, are described, and the word "terrorist" is used with fair freedom.

Again, discussing *Britannica*'s coverage of the 1948 war, Mrs. Levin says: "The authors cite as salient events the death of an Arab hero, Abd al-Quadir al-Husseini, and the massacre of Arabs at Deir Yassin." But in fact that sentence to which she refers notes three "salient events," in the following order: an Arab attack on the Zionist settlement of Mishmar Haemek; the death of al-Husseini (noting, by the way, that he was in command of the Jerusalem front; tactically an important fact?); and Deir Yassin. Also on the 1948 war, Mrs. Levin says that "the grim toll of 6,000 Jewish dead" is not stated. That is true. Whatever the total of Arab dead may have been, presumably it could also be described as a "grim toll," and it, too, is omitted.

In another article some months ago, Mrs. Levin alleged that *Britannica* had omitted mention of the Holocaust. Since that time someone has evidently pointed out to her the article by that title, and perhaps even the numerous references to that event in the Index. It must have been terribly inconvenient to lose such a sensational point. Stripped of the overheated generalities in which they are framed, her remaining points do not begin to measure up to that standard.

The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* remains dedicated to the fair reporting of objective scholarship. It has never subscribed to any political or ideological agenda, and it does not now. It is also not above just criticism, and it stands ready to correct any errors that are brought to its attention. A number of other commentators have recently pointed out certain errors of fact or expression in these articles, and work is under way to address them. This is the daily work of encyclopedia editors, who deal with errors, outdated scholarship, and new discoveries in every subject field imaginable. Their seriousness of purpose is sufficient rebuke to shoddy criticism.

ROBERT MCHENRY
Editor in Chief
Encyclopaedia Britannica
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The son of a friend of mine, a high-school student in Newton, Massachusetts, was researching a term paper as part of the remembrance of the 50th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising. He looked up the names of the death camps in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Nothing. Then he looked up Holocaust in the "macropedia" of major articles. Nothing. He gave up at that point, which was probably just as well.

Disbelieving, I went to the library to check the 1992 edition of the *Britannica*. There is an article on the Holocaust, but only in the "micropedia" section of brief entries; it is shorter than the following one on holograms. The Index also directs the reader to look under Hitler, and some passing references under a few other topics, such as world wars, Judaism, and martyrdom. . . .

The way the entry on Hitler covers Hitler's treatment of Jews is remarkable for what it leaves out—almost everything—and what it puts in—partial denials. There is one sentence explaining that Hitler saw Marxism as the greatest enemy, and behind Marxism, "the greatest enemy of all, the Jew, who for Hitler was the very incarnation of evil." That's it, the entire coverage of Hitler's attitudes and policies toward Jews until after the U.S. entry into the war in 1942. Not one word on his use of anti-Semitism in his rise to power, not one word on *Kristallnacht*, on the growing persecutions of the 1930's, on his propaganda machine—nothing. Nothing on the setting up of labor camps, ghettos, deportations, the planning of the Final Solution.

On page 627 we find the one paragraph on the Holocaust. I quote it in its entirety:

> Meanwhile, he [Hitler] directed Himmler to prepare the ground for the "new order" in Europe. The concentration camps were expanded and to them were added extermination camps such as Auschwitz and Mauthausen, as well as mobile extermination squads. The Jews of Germany, Poland, and the Soviet Union were most numerous among the victims; in German-occupied Europe between 4,500,000 and 5,500,000 had been killed by the end of the war as the only solution in Hitler's view of the Jewish "problem." The sufferings of other races were only less when measured in numbers killed. Such barbarism was indiscriminate, even where, as in the Ukraine, Hitler might have encouraged nationalist feelings to his own advantage.

What is remarkable here is the avoidance of the phrase "Final Solution," which appears nowhere in the article. The phrases "new order" and "Jewish problem" are not explained. The usual figure of six million Jewish victims is shrunk by as much as a million and a half. The unique nature of the Holocaust—which is genocide—is denied, and made only a matter of numbers. This verges disturbingly close to Holocaust denial.

How in the world did *Britannica* come to such an inadequate and disturbing treatment of the Holocaust? The *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, a byword of accuracy, has failed miserably to merit the public's trust.

KARIN MCQUILLAN
Cambridge, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Andrea Levin refers to encyclo-

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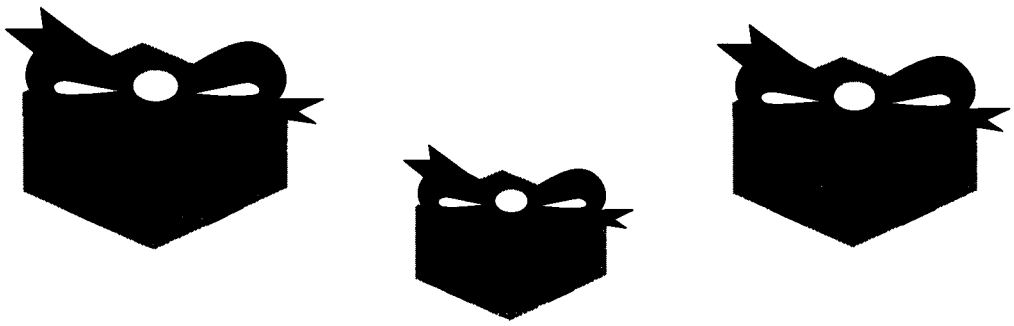

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pedias which "cite . . . the massacre of Arabs at Deir Yassin [but] nothing is said about all the various massacres of Jews by Arab forces." Her choice of words suggests that she accepts the Arab claim that Jewish soldiers carried out a "massacre" at Deir Yassin. As a participant in the Deir Yassin battle, I can attest to the fact that no massacre took place.

During the 1948 War of Independence, the Arab village of Deir Yassin, near Jerusalem, had been fortified by Arab terrorist forces to serve as a launching pad for attacks on Jewish vehicles that were using the nearby road to Jerusalem. Thus the village was a legitimate military target. In an effort to avoid civilian casualties, the Irgun Zvai Leumi forces (myself among them) approaching Deir Yassin on April 8, 1948 forfeited the element of surprise and sent ahead a truck with a loudspeaker to warn the villagers, in Arabic, that a battle would shortly ensue. More than 200 villagers fled. During the subsequent house-to-house fighting between the Jewish forces and the heavily-armed Arab terrorists, my comrades and I discovered that the Arabs had prevented some civilians from leaving in the hope that their presence would deter the Jewish soldiers (which is precisely what the PLO did in Lebanon in 1982). As a result, a number of Arab civilians were inadvertently killed during the battle.

Not surprisingly, Arab propagandists immediately invented a colorful tale of Jews raping and massacring hundreds of defenseless civilians and mutilating their bodies. That is the sort of claptrap that Arab propagandists regularly circulate—the only difference in April 1948 was that the Irgun and the Haganah (the Labor Zionist militia) were locked in a bitter rivalry and some Haganah officials thought it would be to their political advantage to condemn the Irgun "massacre." There were no objective eyewitnesses who claimed to have seen a "massacre" at Deir Yassin—only the surviving Arab residents, who spun stories to aid their cause, and Red Cross officials, who came the next day and saw a number of dead bodies, without having any way of knowing how they were killed.

Once the dust had settled and the passions of the Irgun-Haganah rivalry had cooled, even the Labor-party leadership conceded that there had been no massacre. In 1960, Ben-Gurion's government issued a pamphlet about the Deir Yassin battle which made no reference to any kind of massacre. And in 1969, the Israeli foreign ministry, under the direction of Abba Eban, issued a full account of the episode which bluntly chided the Haganah for claiming that there had been a massacre when in fact "[Haganah] defense units did not take part in the battle nor could they have known at first hand of the circumstances in which civilian casualties had been caused."

The problem, then, is not that some encyclopedias refer to the "Deir Yassin massacre" while failing to mention Arab massacres of Jews; the problem is that they refer to the events at Deir Yassin as a "massacre," when in fact they were nothing of the sort.

SAMUEL SCHACHTER
American Friends of Likud
Coral Springs, Florida

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Bravo to Andrea Levin for pointing out many of the important errors and distortions regarding Middle East history and the Arab-Israeli conflict contained in mainstream reference works, including the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Unfortunately, her correction of an important error in *Britannica* contains an error of its own.

Mrs. Levin writes that in 1922,

> more than 75 percent of the area designated for a Jewish National Home was severed to create an Arab state. . . . Transjordan . . . was created out of the area subtracted from the original Mandate territory.

Not so.

Mrs. Levin correctly states that the territory of the Palestine Mandate included what is today Jordan. But Transjordan was not subtracted from the Mandate in 1922. What happened was that the British got the League of Nations to accept the postponement or withholding (but not termination) of the application of the Jewish National Home provisions of the Mandate in Transjordan. But Transjordan remained a province of Palestine until 1946, with 22 of 28 articles of the Mandate still applicable. Jews were still entitled to rights in Transjordan, including religion, education, and individual settlement, although in practice the British and the Arabs excluded all Jews. Indeed, the Jewish National Fund continued to own land in Transjordan until the late 1940's.

All Palestinians east and west of the Jordan traveled with a passport issued by the British High Commissioner in Jerusalem. Abdullah, formerly Emir of the Hedjaz, was the provincial governor, subject to the authority of the Palestine High Commissioner in Jerusalem. He was counseled by British advisers headed by a Resident as representative of the High Commissioner.

Mrs. Levin's mistake illustrates that written error regarding Middle East history affecting the Arab-Israeli conflict is so widespread that it has infected sources relied upon by those, like her, who are great defenders of factual accuracy on this subject. I recommend that sources to be read and used include the writings of Dr. Paul S. Riebenfeld (especially his article, "The Integrity of Palestine," *Midstream*, August/September 1975), Eugene V. Rostow, William V. O'Brien, Malvina Halberstam, Douglas Feith, and Conor Cruise O'Brien.

EDWARD M. SIEGEL
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I share Andrea Levin's passionate concern for the way Israel is negatively portrayed in books for young readers, through the use of distorted, unbalanced, or dishonest narratives. I have reacted to several of these books, writing to the publishers involved, but have received either unsatisfactory replies or no replies at all.

Here I would like to add to Mrs. Levin's indictment of the *Encyclopaedia Brittanica*. The *Britannica Book of the Year, 1993* includes, under the broad title "1993 World Data," statistics of every nation of the world. The capital of every country is simply noted—except for Israel. Under "Israel, Capital," there is a 50-word explanation that the international community as a whole does not recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital "pending final settlement of territorial and other issues through peace talks between Israel and the Arab parties concerned." In 300 pages of pure statistics, there is no political discussion about any other country.

The entry for Israel under "Density, Persons Per Sq. Mile" excludes the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Golan

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Heights, and East Jerusalem. The Golan Heights are included under Syria, but the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip are not included under any country. Does this mean that, according to *Britannica*, no one lives in these areas? . . .

LEONARD GETZ
Merion, Pennsylvania

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Along with the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and the other reference works cited by Andrea Levin, I would like to add Rand McNally, whose maps of the ancient Middle East do not even show the land of Israel. . . .

It is time for those who distort the record to be challenged. But it seems to me that it is not enough simply to write letters, as Mrs. Levin suggests at the end of her article. I propose that a "watch-list" of publications which present a biased version of the historical record be drawn up and circulated to organizations (newspapers, etc.) committed to factual reporting. I can think of at least four local Jewish publications here in Chicago that should be offering space for such an undertaking. Can you imagine what would happen if we could convince others, especially on a national level, to do the same? . . .

NANCY WISE
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I read Andrea Levin's excellent article on anti-Israel bias in encyclopedias and other reference works, but did not find any mention of the May 1993 article in the *National Geographic*, "The Middle East's Water: Critical Resource." According to this article, *Israel* is at fault for the shortage of fresh water in Arab countries. . . . But, undoubtedly, Mrs. Levin's article was written before the piece in the *National Geographic* appeared, so she was not able to include it.

ALEXANDER SACKS
Rhinebeck, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

As a regular reader of your Israel Watch department, I am becoming increasingly alarmed by the scale and effectiveness of the Arab propaganda machine, which were highlighted most recently in Andrea Levin's article on the encyclopedias.

Arab propaganda is a highly sophisticated weapon of war. Here in England, Arabs have infiltrated many of the charities, whose news sheets and publications are often used to carry their message. . . .

Jews must learn to face up to the fact that Arab propaganda is not something based on ignorance which will respond to a decent presentation of the facts. On the contrary, it is an act of war aimed at delegitimizing the state of Israel and undermining the morale of Jews everywhere. If we wish to survive, we have no alternative but to accept this challenge and act accordingly.

DAVID M. JACOBS
St. Albans, England

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It may interest Andrea Levin, who found anti-Israel bias in various encyclopedias, to read *The Catholic Encyclopedia* of 1967, published by the Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C.

On page 987, as a conclusion to the article on Jews, there is the following comment: "[T]he establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, despite the outrageous injustice that was thereby done to the non-Jewish inhabitants of Palestine, has given a new proof of [Judaism's] vitality."

DAVID GITLIN
Fairview Park, Ohio

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Andrea Levin sagely observes that the "Arab spin" in viewing the Middle East, once regarded as bias, is now standard for leading encyclopedias. This follows the massive movement of anti-Israel professors into major American universities from which they spread their message. Consider, for example, Ann Mosely Lesch, associate director of the Center for Arab and Islamic Studies at Villanova University, whose article on the PLO in the *Oxford Companion to Politics of the World* Mrs. Levin cites. Lesch is the principal author of *Transition to Palestinian Self-Government*, the report of a study group co-chaired by Philip Khoury of MIT and Everett Mendelsohn of Harvard under the auspices of the prestigious American Academy of Arts and Sciences. . . . I asked the highly regarded scholar-soldier and member of the Israeli parliament, Ephraim Sneh, for his opinion of the Lesch report. In distress, he said it had been captured by the PLO.

On a more popular level, Mrs. Levin reports that the *National Geographic* magazine relied on an associate editor of the *Journal of Palestine Studies* for the spurious claim that Palestinian Arabs are descendants of the Canaanites who were displaced by the Hebrews. The *Journal* has come a long way since it left Beirut; it is now published by the highly regarded University of California Press for the Institute of Palestine Studies and Kuwait University. . . . When it was located in Beirut, the Institute coordinated with the PLO's Research Center.

The former *Washington Post* columnist Philip Geyelin has endorsed the *Journal* as "a treasure trove of expert and balanced analysis." A substantial portion of the *Journal* is dedicated to documents, source materials, and detailed chronology of the Middle East. Though useful, its compilations are seriously flawed by omissions. In the . . . academic world, sources like the *Journal* may well be more important than the encyclopedias Mrs. Levin discusses. . . .

Except for small, specialized efforts such as CAMERA, American Jewish organizations appear indifferent to the strategic gains of anti-Israel academics. The same indifference seems to prevail in the Jewish media. Is such concern off-limits? Why?

JOSEPH LERNER
Jerusalem, Israel

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Although beyond the scope of Andrea Levin's article, a review of other entries in the *Oxford Companion to Politics of the World* reveals that the problems she discusses in regard to Israel and the Middle East are symptomatic of the pervasive bias of the work as a whole. The entries on cold-war-related subjects, for example, are particularly revealing. From these, the inquiring student can learn, among other things, . . . that any intensification in the East-West conflict after 1980 was attributable to the West's increased emphasis on the arms race and support of anti-Communist guerrillas. . . .

Cuba's purported accomplishments in education and health are accepted uncritically, but there is no mention of human-rights abuses or political repression in Cuba. . . . When the negatives of Communist rule cannot be entirely ignored, they are treated obliquely

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at best. The Cambodian genocide is blandly, and briefly, described as a "great loss of life" without any sense of the quantitative scope of the genocide that actually occurred. Buried in four upbeat pages on Mao there is . . . a throwaway reference to the "enormous [again unquantified] toll of death and suffering" in China which ensued under his tutelage, but which, we are assured, was "unintended." . . .

Without denying that there are entries of value in and contributors of merit to the *Oxford Companion*, much of this work is a better guide to the proclivities of the political-science profession than to the realities of the contemporary world well beyond the borders of the Middle East.

HENRY FETTER
Los Angeles, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Is converting encyclopedias into PLO tracts part of the Arab war on the West, a part at least as dangerous as the bombing in New York? . . . In any case, who should do what to restore integrity and decency to curricula, reference works, textbooks, and even travel guides?

RICHARD H. SHULMAN
New York City

ANDREA LEVIN writes:

Robert McHenry's response to my criticism of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*'s recently-added "Palestine" entry is disquieting. Unable to justify the distortions and omissions in the 18,000-word section, he advises readers to search through related articles for offsetting, corrective information. While I can appreciate his difficulty in defending the scandalous "Palestine" entry on its merits, Mr. McHenry's rebuttal will not reassure readers who assume accurate information is to be found throughout the *Britannica*. Such is the moral and rhetorical predicament of an editor and institution that have succumbed to political manipulation.

A conspicuous measure of *Britannica*'s capitulation was the editorial decision to create this new section and to lump under it a thoroughly Arabist view of the modern Zionist period, together with the entire history of the area beginning with the stone age and including the emergence of the ancient Jewish kings and nation-states; the Roman, Islamic, and Crusader conquests; and so on. (Thus, under "Israel," readers will not find the history of Saul, David, or Judah Maccabeus, but an account which begins with the post-Englightenment foundations of modern Zionism.) Previously, *Britannica* had resolved the admittedly thorny issue of headings by presenting the ancient history of the wider region, encompassing the territory of modern-day Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Israel, under the title "History of Syria and Palestine." The shift in *Britannica*'s policy coincides with aggressive Arab-revisionist efforts to portray today's Palestinian Arabs as the ancient, indigenous, and rightful inhabitants of the area and the Jews as European interlopers.

In the same way that Mr. McHenry tries to sidestep acknowledging important substantive defects in the "Palestine" section, he fails, understandably, to defend the credentials of its authors, Walid Khalidi and William Ochsenwald. Instead, he charges me with *ad-hominem* attacks for criticizing their affiliations and written statements. Presumably he would prefer that readers not know that Ochsenwald, for example, is the co-author of a textbook in which the term "terrorism" is reserved for Israeli actions while the killers of children at Ma'alot are called "commandos." *Britannica*'s "Palestine" article reflects this same usage in referring to terrorist attacks on innocent civilians, like the coastal-road massacre in 1978, as "guerrilla raids." The terminology applied in this instance and in many others suggests Palestinian-Arab *military* action against *military* objectives, and is but one example of the obfuscation (or omission) throughout the account of Arab aggression and terror against Israelis and others. Thus, the 1972 massacres of 11 Israeli athletes in Munich and of 26 tourists at Lod airport by Palestinian terrorists, events that evoked worldwide horror and denunciation, are concealed in this language: "During the early 1970's the Palestinian guerrillas continued to carry out attacks against Israel." It is difficult to comprehend Mr. McHenry's

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defense of such formulations. In connection with the PLO charter, he also justifies *Britannica*'s selective parroting of PLO euphemisms about that bloody document. In reading about the charter, for example, one would never know that it contains myriad exhortations to "destroy" the Zionist "presence," which is deemed "null and void regardless of the passage of time."

Of note, too, is Mr. McHenry's silence on a number of other significant criticisms of the "Palestine" text, including its omission of the important decision by the PLO in 1974 to adopt a "Ten-Point Program" calling for the annihilation of Israel through a dual campaign of violence and tactical negotiation aimed at acquiring territory in stages. The "Phased Plan" had been a centerpiece of PLO policy in the face of military failure and not mentioning it is consistent with the systematic distortion of the PLO's history.

Mr. McHenry is similarly silent on the virtual omission of the 1973 Yom Kippur War in which attacking Arab armies threatened to overrun Israel, and he offers no defense of Ochsenwald's inane and hostile claim that "the moral basis of the whole Zionist enterprise" would be undermined were Israel to acknowledge Palestinian nationalism.

It must also be said that Mr. McHenry's suggestion that readers will find sound data in the "Israel" entry to supplement the "Palestine" article is misleading. The "Israel" account, too, is marred by distortion—in this case, by a skewed British perspective. For example, no mention is made of Britain's violation, both before and during World War II, of its obligation under its League of Nations Mandate to develop Palestine as a refuge for persecuted Jews. Nor does the article refer to Britain's actively hindering the rescue of European Jews, including its murder of Jewish refugees. A view of the British Mandate entirely excluded from the *Britannica* account is that captured in the remark of Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden urging his American colleagues not to undertake the rescue of European Jews because of the "difficulties of disposing of any considerable number of Jews."

As Mr. McHenry knows, another *Britannica* critic, John Landau, identified numerous other distortions in the "Israel" entry in an article published in the March 27, 1993 *Jerusalem Post.*

Mr. McHenry is careless in his statements about my reference to Holocaust coverage in *Britannica.* I wrote in a newspaper column that the "Palestine" section, in its Arabist tilt, all but excluded the Holocaust, which is entirely true. I never claimed the topic was omitted from the encyclopedia as a whole. Nevertheless, the way the Holocaust is treated, as Karin McQuillan recounts, is very disturbing. What sort of rationale, one wonders, can explain why a subject as profound as the Holocaust appears in the brief "micropedia" volumes while such topics as the "Osaka-Kobe Metropolitan Area" are deemed worthy of the "macropedia," which, according to *Britannica,* is reserved for "major topics of human interest."

I appreciate the comments of Samuel Schachter regarding events at Deir Yassin. I am aware that political infighting among Jewish forces figured in shaping contemporary accounts of the violence that occurred there and that even certain Arab sources have refuted the massacre claims. Likewise, I am grateful to Edward M. Siegel for his vigilance in reminding me of the Mandate's significant legal jurisdiction over Transjordan extending decades after the de-facto creation of the Hashemite state in 1922.

Leonard Getz's findings about the *Britannica Book of the Year, 1993* and Nancy Wise's observations about maps by Rand McNally point up, if further evidence were needed, the pervasiveness of the effort to undermine the legitimacy of Israel and the Jewish presence in the region. David M. Jacobs adds to the somber list of worries in this matter the politicization of charities in Great Britain, and rightly states, I believe, that Jews should act to counter these insidious attacks. To the inventory of enterprises whose purposes have detoured into the path of scapegoating Israel must be added numerous "human-rights" organizations and professional societies in the United States. David Gitlin's quotation from *The Catholic Encyclopedia* of 1967 suggests that the phenomenon, though accelerating in recent years, is not a new one.

Joseph Lerner and Henry Fetter voice concerns I share about the abuse of academic publications and departments in the service of political ends. The debasement of Middle East Studies departments in particular has had an incalculable effect on the public's understanding of events in that region as professors not only propagate misinformation to students but also fill journals with skewed history and television screens with false expertise. Writing in 1979, Bernard Lewis, a leading scholar in the field and emeritus professor of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University, deplored the level of "ignorance" among professors and students alike within the specialty. Lewis pointed out that many Middle East Studies centers are also negatively influenced by dependence on funding from foreign Arab sources.

In some cases Arab donors simply buy positions at prestigious universities. Walid Khalidi, one of *Britannica*'s "Palestine" authors, enjoys unique status at Harvard as an appointee to a position funded by an anonymous Arab donor. When the university was given $1 million in 1982 to establish a professorship in contemporary Arab studies, the donor stipulated that Khalidi was to be hired. Within ten years Khalidi was to retire and a normal search process was to be conducted to fill the position. Nearly twelve years later, Khalidi remains at Harvard.

Britannica has had its own involvement with Middle East politics. According to Steven Emerson's *The American House of Saud* (1985), which describes the far-reaching effects of Saudi largesse on American political life, a vice president of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* Educational Corporation wrote to Illinois Senators Charles Percy and Alan Dixon in April 1984, protesting a congressional resolution to move the American embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Emerson notes that the letter warned that relocating the embassy "would have the emotional impact in the Muslim world that would result throughout the United States if some superpower were to enforce the return of Illinois to French sovereignty." Would Mr. McHenry consider this also consistent with scholarly balance and objectivity?

Richard H. Shulman asks who should do what to counter the widespread problem of distortion in reference works, curriculum guides, and textbooks. Most important is that the public be made

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aware of the dimensions and implications of the problem and that publishers be subjected to the embarrassment, and the costs, of having the shoddiness of their work exposed to public scrutiny. Anyone can be active in this; readers who come across biased accounts can write directly to the publication and can also publicize them through open letters and oped articles in newspapers and other media. Hadassah has taken the problem seriously enough to launch a task force to monitor and respond to bias in textbooks. CAMERA's work focuses primarily on the mass media, where the impact of unreliable texts and resources is all too apparent. It is to be hoped that other Jewish defense agencies will take up these urgent issues.

The Whitney Biennial

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In regard to Richard Ryan's "The Whitney Fiasco & the Critics" [July], I would prefer not to add to the pile of words devoted to the abomination purporting to be—and generally accorded the status of being—an art exhibition. But since this celebration of the talentless and their tawdry titillations has been accorded such attention, I think it helpful to note one other critic's assessment. In an article in *National Review,* Roger Kimball described the phenomenon's aspirational character as follows: "decadence meets triviality to produce a higher vacuousness."

What the Whitney needs is locked doors.

ELIZABETH B. LURIE
President, W.H. Brady Foundation
Maggie Valley, North Carolina

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I found Richard Ryan's article of great personal interest since my wife and I have collected hundreds of works of art of the social-protest genre, including oils, watercolors, prints, and sculpture by American artists from 1930 to 1970. Our collection includes works of social realism, magic realism, social surrealism, as well as works covering the African-American experience by both black and white artists. Some 50 items from the collection will be exhibited late in 1995 under the sponsorship of the American Federation of Arts. . . .

Like Mr. Ryan, I, too, was disappointed by the Whitney 1993 Biennial. I believe, however, that there are some essential differences between our collection and the Whitney exhibition. First, we span a 40-year period encompassing such events as the Great Depression, the rise of fascism, the dust bowl, the Spanish Civil War, World War II, the Holocaust, the cold war, the McCarthy era, and the Vietnam war, as well as race relations from the Ku Klux Klan in the 30's to the civil-rights movement in the 50's and 60's. The Whitney exhibit was far more limited and covered a much narrower historical range. . . .

I also believe that the social issues covered in our collection are simply more momentous than the ones agitating the Biennial. Date rape may be important to some, but surely it is nothing compared to segregation, the rise of fascism in Europe, the diatribes of Father Coughlin, etc., etc. . . .

We initially limited our collection to the 30's, but discovered that many of the artists of that period could not handle color, so that the oils they produced were drab. . . . We started collecting prints of the 30's when we discovered that these same artists . . . produced great linear, black-and-white prints. . . . The depth of feeling involved and the issues of life and death helped them create wonderful lithographs, prints, and engravings. . . . Incidentally, though there were many women printmakers in the 30's, they generally did not concentrate on women's issues but were universal in their choices of subject matter. . . .

PHILIP J. SCHILLER
Highland Park, Illinois

RICHARD RYAN writes:

While Elizabeth B. Lurie and I agree on the merits of the Whitney Biennial, I would never recommend that the Whitney lock its doors—and not simply because, as a private institution, the museum ought to be free to show whatever its administrators please. The Biennial disaster aside, the Whitney's stated mission—to collect and present important modern American art—remains one eminently worth fulfilling. Even in the past year we have seen exhibits which have reminded us what the Whitney might be: I am thinking particularly of the moving Agnes Martin retrospective which the museum mounted last winter and which was unfortunately overshadowed by the high-profile, low-substance Basquiat show one floor above it.

The Whitney's current problems reflect both the banality of the New York art scene and the attitudes of its director, David Ross. Under the Ross regime, the museum seems to have been more interested in chasing trends and controversy than in seriously exploring the richness of American art. If news accounts are to be believed, moreover, Mr. Ross's management skills are as inadequate as his aesthetics. We can only hope that the museum's board will soon jettison this unnecessary cargo.

Given the troubles of the institutional art world, it is always refreshing to find private connoisseurs who care enough to assemble collections which show some sensitivity to the higher purposes of art. The creative powers of artists would no doubt be put to better use if more patrons had some genuine vision as to what kinds of art they should subsidize. Unfortunately, most collectors these days (when not investing or speculating) blindly follow trends established by gallery owners and small cliques of artists. It sounds as though the Schillers have practiced in the higher spirit of patronage, and I hope I will have the opportunity to see their collection when it is exhibited.

Shylock

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

After reading Robert Alter's intelligent, thought-provoking, and beautifully written "Who Is Shylock?" [July], a question occurred to me: will no one ever say a word against Shakespeare? Despite his incredible talent, Shakespeare was morally obtuse. He was never intelligent about questions of right and wrong; he was interested only in the issue of legitimacy: it is wrong to usurp the throne, but the son of a usurper is a legitimate heir.

For Shakespeare, Christianity was legitimate, and Judaism therefore was not. It follows that mercy is good and justice bad, as if justice and mercy were somehow mutually exclusive. "Mercy, however, as exercised by the Christian characters, is conspicuous for *not* dropping as the gentle rain from heaven on any Jewish head," says Mr. Alter. Yet in all of Shakespeare's dramas, is there—any-

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where—a character who shows mercy to another?

Shylock, like Caliban and Malvolio, belongs to an illegitimate category. Legitimate characters in Shakespeare's plays abuse and insult these outcasts as a matter of course. Shylock is unique not because of his callousness—who is more hard-hearted than Hamlet is to Ophelia?—but because his villainy, natural as it may be to a Shakespearean Jew, is well motivated. We may hate Shylock, but we understand his hostility as we can never really understand the anger of Iago, or even of Beatrice and Benedick. *The Merchant of Venice* is a popular play because Shylock is the most psychologically plausible of Shakespeare's villains. . . .

GEORGE JOCHNOWITZ
College of Staten Island
Staten Island, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I was disappointed by Robert Alter's treatment of Shylock. It is clear that he has bought into the conventional, shallow illusion of a reprehensible Shylock and an angelic Portia. Mr. Alter has missed the essence of a play in which all goes by opposites. Just as the leaden casket and not the gold contains what is most valuable, the tawdry appearance of the Jew masks the richness of truth, justice, (yes) conciliation, and integrity he personifies while Portia's beauty hides the fact that she is the "counterfeit" of mercy and justice.

Had Mr. Alter taken seriously Jacob Adler's interpretation of Shylock's action in court mentioned in John Gross's book, or had he looked at a neglected work, *Shylock and Shakespeare*, by Abraham Morevski, a Yiddish actor of 50 years ago, he would have seen, not the Jewish monster he did, but a Shylock who had changed the earlier merry jest of the bond into the angry jest in the courtroom. For jest it was. Shylock wanted to humble Antonio the merchant—to circumcise his heart—by getting him to beg for mercy from the one he had hurt and despised. But Shylock did not count on getting the rug pulled out from under him by a court and judge that had no intention of letting him win.

Just as Shylock, the man with the deepest expression of family solidarity (when his daughter sells his dead wife's ring which she had stolen, he sighs, "I would not have given it [the ring] for a wilderness of monkeys") and the deepest sense of justice (he actually makes an appeal for the humane treatment of Venetian slaves), was seen as a heartless, raging maniac, Portia is likewise not seen in her proper light. As Bassanio remarks when he selects the casket with her picture, "Portia's counterfeit. . . ." She is, after all, injustice and revenge masquerading as its opposite. The Bard wanted us to know that.

What is more, Bassanio did not guess the right casket as a result of his sterling qualities. He had been solidly prepped. Most critics focus on Portia's hint in the rhymes of the song at selection time, which they regard as hardly a hint or a help, coming as it does under the duress of the moment of choice. This false lead, provided by Shakespeare, obscures the way it was really done. Because the critics are so ready to see Shylock as bad and Portia good, they do not look for this. But if anyone wants to check it out, he will find that none other than Nerissa, at Portia's implied behest, spilled the beans, which service she used to feather her own nest and get herself a husband.

In other words, the play is completely different from what Robert Alter or John Gross would have us believe. Moreover, it was clearly written by an author head and shoulders above the anti-Semite they believe he was, a man who could be regarded as having the proverbial "Jewish heart." Shakespeare clearly wrote for the ages. Can anyone imagine that the greatest dramatist who ever lived, capable of seeing into the deepest recesses of the human heart, shared the anti-Semitism of his milieu? To see him as such is the biggest putdown of greatness imaginable—like the tailor, who, when asked what he thought of the slumming, mighty emperor he had met, said he was a forty-four short.

DAVID BASCH
West Hartford, Connecticut

ROBERT ALTER writes:

I thank George Jochnowitz for his kind words on my article as well as for his shrewd observation about the category of illegitimacy in Shakespeare's plays.

David Basch's letter is a model of misreading—of my article as well as of the play. I never represented Portia as "angelic," and I did not suggest that Shylock was merely "reprehensible." Mr. Basch offers a whole series of extremely implausible claims about the main characters and the plot. Part of his difficulty may be a shaky construal of the words of the play. "Portia's counterfeit" in context means "Portia's simulacrum" and not, as he imagines, "Portia is false." More generally, he is led astray by his bardolatry, which encourages his illusion that "the greatest dramatist who ever lived" must completely transcend the prejudices of his age. I would recommend to him a strong daily dose of Mr. Jochnowitz's acerbic view that Shakespeare may be a dubious guide on moral questions.

Mexican-Americans

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Christopher Caldwell, in his review of Peter Skerry's *Mexican Americans* [Books in Review, June], notes Skerry's point that, so far, Americans of Mexican descent and their recently arrived kindred from Mexico have declined to play the role of an oppressed minority in a statist extravaganza. Despite this good news, though, Skerry seems to fear that Mexicans might eventually succumb to the political manipulations of our times.

Well, maybe—but probably not. For example, answering recent charges that Mexican immigrants threaten to bankrupt the welfare system, columnist George F. Will noted that the "work ethic," not the attractions of bureaucratic largesse, is what brings the immigrants up here in the first place (as the *Wall Street Journal* has also pointed out, that is what brought the Europeans here, too).

Having come to work, they do. The Mexicans dodged the 1990 census because they feared a connection between it and the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), so nobody really knows how many Mexican nationals, documented and otherwise, live in the Los Angeles area. For lack of better information, the figure of one million is commonly bandied about, and if those one million live four to an apartment and pay an average of $500 per month in rent, then they put $1.5 billion per year into the local economy in rent payments alone. The amount of business they must generate at the discount stores and car dealerships simply boggles the mind. And they

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get all that money by working, and they pay taxes, too. . . .

Much of the Mexicans' success comes from their fidelity to—get this—"family values." As in *I Remember Mama*, the member with a job supports the others until they, too, find work. In time, the immigrants learn to take advantage of unemployment benefits and, alas, to exploit the welfare system, but the underlying unity remains a family that may include cousins, uncles, and in-laws in other communities. . . .

These two elements, a belief in honest work and devotion to the family unit, put the Mexicans completely at odds with the liberal agenda. They want the schools to teach their children to use English, not condoms, and they view the looters of last April as opportunistic thieves. These are among the reasons that, as Skerry notes, they have not accepted the liberal agenda and the role they were invited to play in it. . . .

DON SHARP
San Pedro, California

CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL writes:

Don Sharp appears to have no fundamental disagreement with either Peter Skerry or me. That Mexican-Americans are a socially conservative people at odds with the liberal elites who control Mexican-American machine politics is, in fact, one of the central points of Skerry's book. Readers can return to my review for a summary of the reason Skerry adduces for this crisis in representation, but his thesis can be boiled down to this: The problem is not with "Mexican political instincts," but with American political institutions.

Mr. Sharp's scenario of Mexican-American involvement in the Los Angeles economy is a rosy one, and the figures certainly bear him out. True, Mexican immigrants in Los Angeles account for a disproportionate amount of public spending in two areas—health care and education—due to their having, on average, larger families. But in August, Rebecca L. Clark and Jeffrey S. Passel of the Urban Institute's Program for Research on Immigration Policy published a study on tax *revenues* from immigrants in Los Angeles county, showing that such revenues have been vastly underestimated. Clark and Passel found that immigrants contributed $10.6 billion of the $38.6-billion total collected in federal income tax, state income tax, FICA, unemployment insurance, and property tax in Los Angeles county in 1992. Moreover, long-term immigrants (pre-1980 arrivals) made up 15 percent of Los Angeles county's population but paid 18 percent of the revenues from those five taxes—i.e., considerably more than their fair share.

Nonetheless, Mr. Sharp should not ignore the fact that—as George Borjas, Linda Chavez, and, indeed, Peter Skerry have noted—Mexicans grow more dependent on state and federal social services as they assimilate. This would seem to me to provide ample grounds for Skerry's skepticism about the perverse incentives offered by the "new American political system."

Furtwängler

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Among the never-ending writings on Wilhelm Furtwängler in the past few years, I found Samuel Lipman's article, "Furtwängler & the Nazis" [Music, March], to be the most humane and even wise, in spite of the fact that Mr. Lipman probably does not consider himself a Furtwängler admirer. Permit me, however, belatedly to add a few, let us say, marginal notes to the piece. What qualifies me to write this letter? Sixty-two years ago I heard a full season of Furtwängler concerts in Berlin. Later, the last three Jews in the Berlin Philharmonic—Szymon Goldberg, Nikolai Graudan, and Gilbert Back—became close friends of mine. A better source about Furtwängler the musician and the human being could hardly be found. Then, just about a quarter-century ago, Frau Furtwängler became and remained a close and dear friend. . . .

Let me first comment on Mr. Lipman's characterization of Hans-Hubert Schönzeler's biography of Furtwängler, which he calls "quasi-official." This is not the case. As a biography, it is rather weak and superficial, although reliable in its facts.

Next, let me say something about the reminiscences of Berta Geissmar, Furtwängler's longtime secretary, which Mr. Lipman also mentions. I remember once reading aloud to Goldberg, Graudan, and Back a passage from Geissmar's book describing a scene in which they had been

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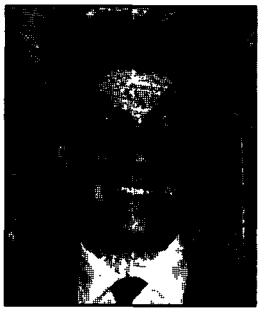

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present. They laughed their heads off and called her a liar—a word, I believe, that can be applied to other passages in the book as well.

Mr. Lipman says that the conductor Fritz Busch, although not Jewish, left Germany on principle after Hitler came to power. This is not so. Busch waited for several weeks, expecting to be named head of the Berlin Staatsoper, a post Goering had supposedly promised him. When the job went to Furtwängler instead, Busch left. I saw him several times in Berlin during this period, and, if memory serves, he writes about it openly in his autobiography. But I do not mention this to accuse Busch; he was a decent and largely unpolitical man.

Here, let me say something about emigration in general. In any country, but particularly in Germany, only a tiny minority emigrates, even when a regime as extreme as the Nazis takes over. This is why so many Jews did not want to leave and made up their minds too late and perished. (This, of course, is only one factor; the other was that no country wanted to take them in.) If anti-Semitism had not been part of the Nazi program, but all the other horrifying things remained, I do not have the slightest doubt that Otto Klemperer, Bruno Walter, and others would have stayed. To this can be added the fact that Hitler at first was not taken seriously by intellectuals. The widespread opinion was that he would last only a few months.

Furtwängler, to be sure, was a special case. I have no right to offer guesses about his motives, but one thing is certain: he did not stay in order to help the Nazis, whom he detested.

Mr. Lipman says that Furtwängler did not save Jewish musicians because he liked Jews. Does Mr. Lipman have any specific facts to back up this assertion? . . . It took me a long time to learn how unwise it is to make such large and vague statements; if made in print, they must be backed up by indisputable facts. From all I know, I can say with confidence that Mr. Lipman is wrong. I do not base my statement on the fact that Furtwängler helped so many Jews and in some cases saved their lives. He did not do this out of love for the Jews (and, of course, would not have done it had he been a Jew-hater), but to do his duty as a human being. It certainly did not help make him popular with the Nazi regime. But quite aside from all this, what makes me so sure on this point are simple human traits, little events my Jewish orchestra friends told me about. Also, a person growing up in a family like Furtwängler's, with so many ties to Jewish relatives and friends, is most likely to be immune from hatred. . . .

Mr. Lipman writes that "by carrying the baton in his right hand, [Furtwängler] seems to have avoided giving the Hitler salute." A Jewish eyewitness (a distant relative) described the scene to me: imagine about 2,000 people in the concert hall—the audience, the orchestra, Hitler's entourage—all 2,000 with raised arms (including my relative, who was not proud to admit it . . .), and one lonely person on the podium not participating. Would Mr. Lipman have had Furtwängler's courage? Would I? . . .

Mr. Lipman says that after the war Yehudi Menuhin helped Furtwängler resume conducting. Again, not so. Germany and all of Europe were eagerly waiting for Furtwängler and for that which only he could give them. Menuhin's purpose was different: his help was intended as a demonstration against hatred. . . .

The Bruno Walter letter condemning Furtwängler that Mr. Lipman quotes is sickening in its holier-than-thou attitude, as were similar letters by Thomas Mann. . . . I find it touching how Furtwängler reached out to resume old relationships and cruel how he was rebuked by some.

The wisdom of Mr. Lipman's article is fully evident in his final section dealing with the moral dilemma of artists, intellectuals, and all citizens living under Nazism and Communism. With all my criticism, my main purpose in writing this letter is to express my admiration for the article and my gratitude to Mr. Lipman.

THEODORE FRONT
Los Angeles, California

SAMUEL LIPMAN writes:

I thank Theodore Front for his kind words about my article; I am indeed not a particular admirer of Furtwängler the man, but I am a great admirer of Furtwängler the artist. The points Mr. Front raises are often highly interesting, and all of them require an answer, if in some cases only a brief one.

I called Schönzeler's biography "quasi-official" precisely because he writes in the preface, "I admired and adored him [Furtwängler] . . ."; a bit down the page he adds, "My sincerest thanks go to Frau Elisabeth Furtwängler for her generous help and hospitality"; and, finally, he remarks, "All pictorial material was kindly put at my disposal by Frau Elisabeth Furtwängler out of the Furtwängler archives. . . ."

The case of the absolute reliability of the reminiscences of Berta Geissmar is difficult to decide after the passage of 50 (and more) years. I have checked the scene Mr. Front alludes to, in both the English and German editions of her book; it briefly describes a picnic on April 1, 1933, the day of a Nazi-enforced boycott of Jewish establishments. Geissmar was concerned that the office of the Berlin Philharmonic, which she, as Furtwängler's secretary, effectively ran, would be put under siege. The picnic participants, according to Geissmar, included the wives of the artists mentioned by Mr. Front and also the Philharmonic's famed cellist Joseph Schuster and his wife. I do not know what constitutes the lie in this passage; in any case, it seems too unimportant a matter to impugn, without the provision of any further evidence, the rest of Geissmar's book.

The reason behind the conductor Fritz Busch's departure from Germany is a more important question. From the recently published letters of Adolf Busch, his violinist brother, it does seem that Fritz was less publicly outspoken than Adolf about the Nazis. It must be remembered, however, that Fritz lived with his family in Germany, where the locus of his career was; Adolf lived with his family in Switzerland, and possessed a worldwide career. Fritz was sufficiently outspoken to have been the subject of a Nazi demonstration which prevented him from conducting a performance of the Dresden Opera in March 1933, and resulted immediately in his ouster as music director of the Dresden Staatsoper. Immediately thereafter, he received from Hermann Goering the promise of the directorship of the Berlin Opera, a promise reneged on a short time later by Goering at the demand (according to Goering) of Hitler himself. In any case, Fritz Busch

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left Germany for good at the beginning of May 1933; in the middle of that month he received an official invitation from Winifred Wagner, which he refused, to conduct at Bayreuth, and in June left Europe for a post at the Teatro Colón in Buenos Aires. He did not return to Germany until 1951.

I must agree with Mr. Front about the complexities of emigration. He is certainly right that many intelligent and prosperous Germans thought that such madness as Hitler and the Nazis could not last. Many of these privileged people—not only in Germany—paid for this political misjudgment with their lives. However, I see no real evidence that Furtwängler liked Jews; he seems to me to have always been over-ready to make distinctions between the right kind of Jews, who should be protected, and the wrong kind, whom it was good for Germany to suppress. I agree with Mr. Front that Furtwängler showed great courage in refusing, via a ruse, to salute Hitler; it certainly counts strongly in his favor on the moral balance sheet.

I believe that Mr. Front underestimates the role played by the prestige and efforts of the great Jewish violinist Yehudi Menuhin in Furtwängler's rehabilitation. I do not believe that this was necessarily wrong of Menuhin, though I can certainly understand why honest men—especially the multitude who had personally suffered from the Nazis—might differ on this point. I agree with Mr. Front that the tone of Bruno Walter's letter to Furtwängler, written from the sunny climes of Beverly Hills—with its mordant question: "Of what significance is your assistance in the isolated case of a few Jews?"—is unpleasantly pious.

Denazification & Poland

To the Editor of Commentary:

Anna Wolff-Poweska [Letters from Readers, July], responding to my letter in the February issue, says that I misinterpreted her article on denazification, which appeared in the Polish journal *Tygodnik Powszechny*. I am continuing this debate only because it touches upon some fundamental questions concerning ways of dealing with the totalitarian past. . . .

Describing the situation in post-Nazi Germany, Mrs. Poweska opens her article by saying that the victors' right to punish the defeated enemy is as old as history. In the course of the article, the victors (the Allies) come to seem unsympathetic while the plight of the defeated enemy evokes a kind of natural compassion. Mrs. Poweska argues that those Nazis who were discredited by the denazification process were not persuaded of their guilt; instead, they interpreted denazification as a demonstration of the victors' arrogance and revenge. This is why Mrs. Poweska considers denazification a failed experiment, and says so explicitly in the subtitle of her article. She ends her article with the following statement:

> Denazification could not bring about the expected results because it was fundamentally flawed by an internal contradiction: its general object—to remove former Nazis from influence in key areas of political, economic, and cultural life—could not be reconciled with its other principal aim: namely, to build an open society in a new democratic state. [My translation]

I think that this line of argument justifies my conclusion that Mrs. Poweska rejects the very idea of denazification, though, I should add, she does propose an alternative: to leave the entire process to the sphere of moral reeducation.

Though she is writing ostensibly about Germany and the Nazis, her real subject is Poland and other post-Communist countries in which some people have dared to think about decommunization. Fortunately from Mrs. Poweska's point of view (though not my own), Poland has not introduced even the slightest measures to hinder former Communists and their eager servants from regaining their key positions in economic, cultural, and political life. The former Communist party is now the strongest in Poland, and—four years after the collapse of the Communist regime—it won the elections held in September. Roughly 50,000 people were killed in Polish Communist prisons and labor camps during the 45 years of the old regime, but only one security official has been indicted for political murder. Former Communist propagandists are now media moguls; former apparatchiks are now running the banking system; and so on. This is what happens when victors do not exercise the prerogatives of victory.

Mrs. Poweska makes one grave error in her diatribe: using postwar Germany to illustrate her thesis. Can we imagine what would have happened in, say, 1949 if her ideas had been carried out and there had been no active denazification process; if Nazi party officials, propagandists, secret police, and the like had not been investigated and prosecuted and the National Socialist (Nazi) party had been allowed to operate, perhaps simply removing the "National" from its name? To judge from what has been happening in post-Communist countries, I would say that the results would have been hair-raising.

It is this situation that has prevailed in Poland and every other post-Communist country (with the possible exception of the Czech Republic, where mild decommunization has taken place). We can argue about whether it is permissible to compare the crimes of Communism with those of Nazism, but it seems to me unarguable that in politics one cannot leave everything to the spontaneous development of a conscience on the part of former criminals and their accomplices. Alas, we know that all too well now in Poland.

Andrzej Nowak
Arka
Cracow, Poland

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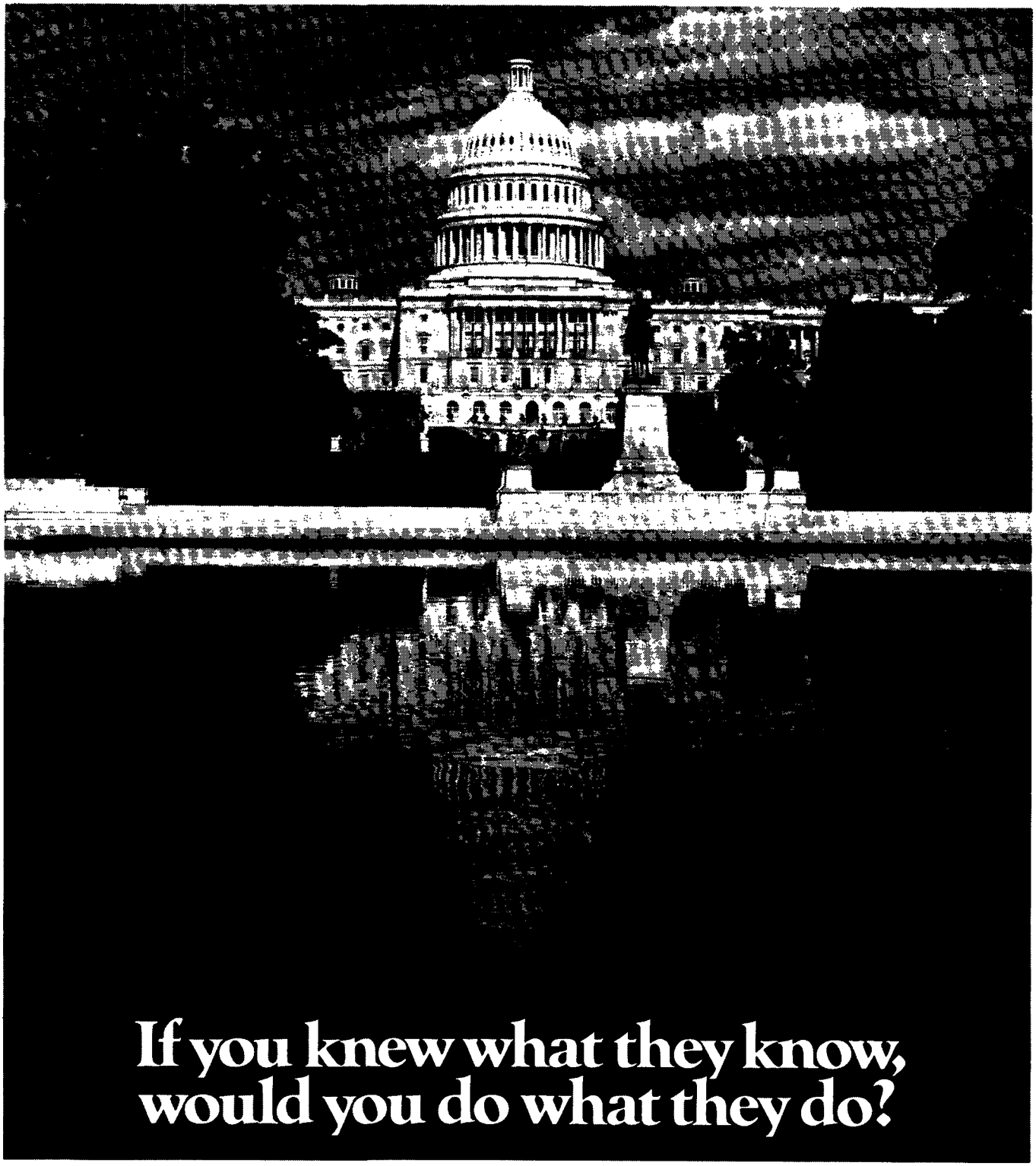

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Why a Palestinian State Is Still A Mortal Threat

David Bar-Illan

BOTH Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres insist that the Declaration of Principles signed by Israel and the PLO in Washington on September 13—popularly known as the "Gaza/Jericho First" plan—contains a fail-safe mechanism. Anything ceded in this plan, they claim, is retrievable. Not a single Jewish settlement in the territories will be dismantled, and the Israeli army will be in charge of safeguarding the settlers. Moreover, the experiment will begin with Gaza, whose loss virtually no Israeli will mourn, and Jericho, a small and insignificant town near the Jordanian border. If the experiment fails, if the Arabs use the removal of the "occupation" not to build institutions of self-government but to establish terror bases from which to attack Israel, the Israeli army will move in and cancel the whole deal.

It is this promise of reversibility that makes the plan attractive even to many Israeli hawks. Everything else, they say, has been tried; we cannot go on with the intolerable status quo; and so long as this move is reversible, there is virtually nothing to lose. If the plan works, we will have peace at last, even if it means the establishment of a Palestinian state. If the plan collapses, we will get credit for trying.

According to polls, a majority of Israelis deem peace and separation from the 1.7 million Palestinian Arabs in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza more important than keeping all the land won in the 1967 war. Only a third or so consider relinquishing Samarian towns like Shilo, Bethel, and Ariel as unthinkable as giving up Tel Aviv. Even fewer are those who believe that forfeiting the mountains of Judea and Samaria, the cradle of Jewish civilization, is tantamount to denying the legitimacy of the Zionist enterprise.

Nevertheless, to a majority, holding on to these mountains remains a simple matter of survival. That a hostile army should again threaten Israel from hills within rifle range of Tel Aviv's suburbs and Jerusalem's center is something virtually every Israeli finds unacceptable.

The architects of the agreement with the PLO are aware of this fundamental concern. They respond to it with breathtaking simplicity: once the main grievance of the people on those hills—the absence of self-determination—is removed, they will no longer be hostile. And anyway, they will be rendered harmless, as Peres informed U.S. television audiences in September, by being demilitarized. On returning to Israel from Washington he added another grievance—poverty—which will have to be eliminated if peace is to reign. Once the Palestinians are assured of three square meals a day, once they realize what prosperity peace can bring, they will have a stake in peaceful coexistence.

But neither these arguments nor their rebuttals impress Israelis as much as the contention that the whole pact with the PLO is no more than an experiment. If Israelis thought that there was no way back, that the Rabin-Arafat handshake on the White House lawn signified an irrevocable withdrawal to the 1949 armistice lines and the establishment of a PLO state beyond those lines, it is doubtful that more than a small minority would support the move.

Yet in truth there *is* no going back for Israel—unless the army's departure from Gaza triggers an immediate daily barrage of Katyushas on nearby kibbutzim and towns. Anything less than that—such as ambushes of military vehicles, armed assaults on bus passengers, attempts by suicide bombers to blow up civilian and military targets—will be depicted as the expected attempts by extremists to undermine the process, the unavoidable birth pangs of the new era. Israelis will be told that eventually the new PLO police will eliminate these extremists with Israeli help. And, as Peres sees it, the world community, quick to condemn Israel when its security services have dealt with Arab terrorists, will view the PLO handling of the situation as a strictly internal matter.

Oddly, the moral problem posed by letting the PLO establish order in the territories seems to perturb no one. In fact, Rabin was positively gleeful at the prospect of the PLO police, "unhampered by Supreme Court rulings and human-rights organizations," as he put it, taking care of "peace opponents." How the PLO "takes care" of opponents is no secret: most of the torture-

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murders of almost 1,000 "collaborators"—a euphemism for any Palestinian who runs afoul of local "enforcer" gangs—have been committed by Arafat's supposedly "moderate" Fatah faction. Neither Rabin nor his super-dovish coalition allies appears to recall that in 1983 the then-Defense Minister, Ariel Sharon, was held "indirectly responsible" by a government inquiry commission for "not anticipating" the actions of Christian militiamen allowed into the Palestinian towns of Sabra and Shatila. It will be interesting to see if Amnesty International and the Israeli "human-rights" organization B'tselem will censure Rabin and Peres for inviting a scenario similar to Sabra-Shatila or nominate them for the Nobel Peace Prize.

BE THAT as it may, violence will go on. Without Israeli control it will be impossible to prevent the importation of vast quantities of small arms into the territories, and the three main factions—"mainstream" PLO, radical leftists, and Islamic fundamentalists—will struggle for primacy.

It can, however, safely be expected that not even the most fanatic jihadists will be foolish enough to celebrate the departure of the Israeli army with a spectacular Katyusha shower on, say, Yad Mordekhai—a kibbutz on the Gaza-strip border. Instead, there will in all probability be a controlled war of attrition against the Jewish residents of the territories and the army units assigned to protect them. Each segment of the "Palestinian resistance" will play its role in this war. It is even possible that so long as there are Israelis around to be targeted, internecine fighting among the major terrorist groups will be kept to a minimum.

That Arafat's intentions are not pacific is not mere speculation. Almost immediately after his handshake with Rabin, Arafat and his aides announced that the *intifada* would continue in all areas in which the "occupation" was still present. From the start, Arafat blithely ignored the commitment he made in a letter to the Norwegian Foreign Minister, Jorgen Holst, to "reject violence and terrorism in public statements." He did not call for the cessation of violence in his Washington speech, and while his letter to Rabin committed the PLO to nonviolence, there was nothing in it about controlling elements like Hamas and the Islamic Jihad.

Nor do Arafat's pronouncements to his own people match his interviews with American journalists. In a telephoned speech to students at Nablus's Najah University on September 1, he assured his audience that the agreement with Israel was only the first phase of the PLO's "phased plan," which calls for the use of Palestinian sovereignty in part of Palestine as a springboard for a final assault on Israel. The same line is preached by PLO representatives in refugee camps in Lebanon and Jordan.

Both the PLO and the "rejectionists" have developed sophisticated skills in pursuing the "armed struggle." They have learned when to employ lone, "unaffiliated" knifers and suicidal bombers to demoralize civilian populations, and when to ambush an army patrol with military precision. If they feel that the Israeli army will evacuate sooner without provocation, they may lie low. But chances are that the different Palestinian groups will try to score points with the population by hastening the Israeli withdrawal. The mood in Israel will favor a fast evacuation no matter what—no one wants to die for land that has already been relinquished. Nor can military morale be maintained when the army is limited to purely defensive, reactive measures.

Ironically, the security forces' success in apprehending terrorists has been spectacular in recent months. But under the new agreement it is doubtful that they will be able to continue employing the most effective anti-terrorist tactics—"initiated actions" by special army units. Tipped by the intelligence services, these special units, dressed as Arabs, penetrate villages and refugee shanty towns which serve as terrorist bases and apprehend wanted terrorists. To do this, obviously, the army must have the freedom to engage in "hot pursuit."

So obvious is this that it occurred even to American media interviewers when the Israel-PLO pact was first revealed—particularly when it became known that Israeli army officers, from Chief of the General Staff Ehud Barak down, had expressed concern about the army's ability to combat terrorism under the new circumstances. Yet when asked what would happen if terrorists struck at Israelis and then escaped to the self-rule zone, Peres answered that it was to be hoped such things would not happen. Israelis who were not satisfied with that answer were told that there would be an exchange of intelligence and other forms of collaboration between the Israeli army and the PLO police. Working together they would be able to eliminate terrorism.

IN GENERAL, Peres and Rabin keep assuring Israelis that the new Palestinian entity will not be a sovereign state. Like former Secretary of State James Baker, Israeli ministers like to call the territories' ultimate status "something more than autonomy and less than a state." But the Declaration of Principles makes it clear that the creation of a PLO state in all of the West Bank and Gaza, with minor border adjustments, is inevitable. The very preamble to the declaration speaks of the "mutual legitimate and political rights" of the two sides, putting Israel and the Palestinians on equal footing. The Palestinian interim governing body—the Council—will have executive, legislative, and judicial authority. Its jurisdiction will cover the entire West Bank and the Gaza district, which will be viewed as "a single territorial unit." There will

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be a Palestinian Land Authority and a Palestinian Water Administration Authority. This, clearly, is a state in the making.

The agreement even implicitly entertains the idea of Jerusalem as the capital of the new state. Jerusalem is specifically included as an issue to be raised at the permanent-status negotiations, to commence "as soon as possible, but not later than the beginning of the third year of the interim period." And Jerusalem's Arab residents can both vote and be elected to the Council.

Other issues left for these discussions are refugees, settlements, security arrangements, borders, and relations with other neighbors. Only the mention of borders in this context hints that, while the West Bank and Gaza are certain to become the Palestinian state, border adjustments may still be negotiated.

To keep insisting, as Rabin and Peres are doing, that it will be possible to prevent the birth of a Palestinian state after the interim period—which may last far less than five years—is to insult the intelligence of Israelis and Palestinians alike. In fact, all that is needed for the emergence of a Palestinian state is the withdrawal of Israeli troops. Even if the territory were handed to Jordan, King Hussein would not be able to prevent a declaration of Palestinian sovereignty.

The question, then, is not whether the government's plan will lead to a Palestinian state—which Labor no less than Likud has always considered a mortal danger to Israel—but whether Israel and a Palestinian state can coexist in peace.

The advocates of the agreement say that a Palestinian state would not only pose no danger, it would enhance Israeli security by enabling Israel to make peace with other Arab countries. When Rabin returned from Washington (via Morocco), he mocked right-wing warnings that the agreement would create a terrorist state which would endanger Israel. To his credit, he did not deny that a PLO state might become a base for terrorists; he merely asserted that

> Palestinian terrorism has never been, is not now, and will not be in the future a threat to the existence of the state of Israel. [Terrorism] is, to be sure, a troublesome, painful threat that leads to the loss of life of Israeli soldiers and civilians, but it does not and cannot threaten Israel's existence.

Rabin's confidence about the relative safety of the agreement has had a decisive impact on the Israeli electorate. He served, after all, as Chief of the General Staff in the Six-Day War and as Defense Minister under Yitzhak Shamir in the national-unity government. To make the effect of his confidence even greater, over 100 high-ranking reserve officers signed an advertisement supporting the agreement. Ironically, it came just before the 20th anniversary of the Yom Kippur War, which reminded the less sanguine that the whole army brass, almost to a man, was dead wrong about the intentions of Israel's neighbors at that time. It was a miscalculation that almost cost Israel its life.

THERE is, to be sure, no disputing the contention that a Palestinian state in itself cannot threaten Israel's existence. This is not because it will be demilitarized, or because it will be, in Abba Eban's words, a small country with "zero tanks" against Israel's 4,000 tanks. To the contrary, whereas an unpopulated desert like the Sinai can be kept more or less demilitarized and efficiently patrolled and inspected by multinational forces, there is no way to keep a sovereign nation from cheating.

Thus, as Iraq has shown, despite all the sophisticated monitoring available today, a sovereign country can accumulate heavy arms undetected. With its own airports and seaport, and with free movement across the Jordanian border, the new Palestinian state could acquire not only tanks but also fighter planes and heavy artillery. And even if a quasi-demilitarized status were negotiated, Israel would not be able to invade the newly established Palestine to enforce the agreement against violation. In such cases the international community would be more likely to impose sanctions on the "aggressor" Israel than on Palestine.

The new state will indeed be tiny in area, but it will be strategically and topographically at an advantage vis-à-vis Israel. Nor will the size of its population be insignificant. Now under two million, it will bring in—perhaps even during the interim period—close to half-a-million refugees from the 1967 war. Once it becomes independent, it will be pressured by Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria to absorb the Palestinians now living in "refugee camps" in those countries. This could mean the addition of another million.

Still, despite all that, even a hostile and armed Palestine will pose no great threat by itself to the powerful Israeli army. But Palestine will not exist by itself. Israel's withdrawal from the Jordan valley and the Judean-Samarian mountains will leave in Arab/Muslim hands an uninterrupted land mass from Iran to the outskirts of Tel Aviv.

Rabin's rationale for creating this situation by getting out of the territories, and by concluding agreements as quickly as possible with Israel's immediate neighbors, Jordan and Syria, is based on the assumption that Iraq and Iran will possess nonconventional arms—including nuclear weapons—before the end of the decade. It would be better for Israel, he contends, to be at peace with Jordan and Syria and thus prevent their joining Iraq or Iran (or both) in an eastern front against Israel.

But would peace treaties with Syria and Jordan keep them out of war with Israel? After all, as Peres himself once said, the number of broken treaties in the Middle East is equal to the number signed.

As for the about-face on the PLO, the justifica-

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tion for it was that if Israel did not talk to Arafat it would have to talk to Hamas. It is precisely this kind of reasoning which led the West to believe that Saddam Hussein was preferable to the Iranian ayatollahs, only to find that the difference was in style rather than substance. Saddam had learned the language the West wanted to hear, but in ruthlessness and ambition there was little to choose between his regime and that of Teheran. Much the same holds for the PLO and Hamas.

The enthronement of the PLO has also made Jordan's King Hussein unhappy. Jordan has always paid lip service to the PLO's role as the "sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people," but King Hussein has seen a PLO state as a threat and has counted on Israel to prevent it. The king is even more unhappy about the idea—ardently touted by Peres to allay Israeli fears of an irredentist, unviable state next door—of confederation between Palestine and Jordan. Since the majority of the Jordanian population consists of Palestinians from west of the Jordan river, it is very likely that such a confederation would be dominated by the new Palestinian state and would spell the demise of the Hashemite monarchy. The prospect of a radical Palestine-Jordan bordering Israel on one side and Saddam Hussein's Iraq and Hafez Assad's Syria on the other must give pause even to the terminally optimistic.

THE agreement's supporters, of course, foresee a different future. Israeli economists forecast the imminent lifting of the Arab boycott, an avalanche of foreign investments, and the free movement both of cheap Arab labor and of goods in and out of Israel. Most enticing are the projections of huge exports to the Arab world, resulting in Israeli prosperity of unprecedented proportions.

The American diplomat, Roger Harrison, who once served as political counselor in Israel and ambassador to Jordan, has articulated the prevailingly optimistic attitude in a *New York Times* article. The new Palestinian state, he writes,

> will have to be far less concerned with Israel's destruction than with its own survival. . . . It would have no army worth the name and no means of acquiring one, since all the money squeezed from reluctant Gulf states will be required for more urgent problems.

Harrison, moreover, believes that the new state would not be radical, because

> Egypt, Jordan, and even Syria (assuming an agreement is reached on the status of the Golan Heights) will all have a stake in peace; none would welcome the increase in power of radical interests that a militant state would portend.

What Harrison forgets is that even if Assad were to expel the rejectionist Palestinian organizations he is harboring in Damascus, cut his ties with Iran, and opt for a pro-Western stance, there would still be Iraq, Libya, Sudan, and Iran to sponsor radicals and fundamentalists. Nor is the general belief warranted that the Saudis and the Gulf emirates would fight against a fundamentalist regime. Hamas's main financial support today comes from Saudi Arabia.

Neither Harrison nor anyone else has much to say about what will happen if, as he writes, "fundamentalist fever spreads throughout the Mideast, toppling the moderate governments in Egypt and Jordan and the despotic but cautious leadership in Damascus." It is a danger, he admits,

> but not one Israeli occupation helps deter. The fundamentalists and other radicals have used the occupation for decades as their chief rallying cry—their "ladder to power," to use King Hussein's phrase. Removing that ladder will cripple them, which is why they are determined to scuttle any agreement.

Thus—not for the first time—Israel is blamed for contributing to the spread of Islamic fundamentalism. Harrison implies that this movement, which has swept the Muslim and Arab world from the Persian Gulf to the Atlantic, will subside if only Israel gives the Palestinians what they want.

Quite apart from the implausibility of this analysis, the trouble is that what the Palestinians want right now is not just a Palestinian state in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza but half of Jerusalem as its capital and the "right of return" for the refugees of the 1948 war so that they can go back to their former homes in Israel. Aware of this, Peres's deputy, Yossi Beilin, the architect of the agreement with the PLO, is already talking of a "quarter" in Jerusalem which would be run by Palestinians.

The "right of return" is no longer unthinkable, either. Uri Avnery, a prominent journalist who is now being celebrated as a prophet for having long advocated precisely what the government is bringing about—recognition of the PLO and a Palestinian state at the 1967 lines—has begun suggesting that the resettlement of 300,000-400,000 Palestinians inside Israel would enhance the chances of peace.

Here, then, is what the government is asking the people of Israel to believe: that the Palestinian state will form a benign, business-oriented confederation with Jordan; that, with open borders, 150,000 Arab workers will enter Israel every day and—satisfied with seeing their flag in Gaza, Hebron, and Nablus—will forget all the catechisms of hatred and revenge they have been taught and will work peacefully in Israel; that the very same chieftains who fathered international terrorism will from now on change course completely, apprehending and hanging Islamic fundamentalists, heroes and martyrs of the glorious *intifada*, for the sake of the Israeli infidels; that

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the 1948 Palestinian refugees and their offspring, who for 45 years have been kept in squalor with promises of reclaiming their homes, will now be satisfied to relinquish those claims; that Syria, once it has regained the Golan, will start disarming, throw out the Palestinian rejectionists, and disband Hezbollah ("Syrian youth are becoming democratic. Soon they will not tolerate a dictatorial government," said Peres recently); that Iraq, Libya, and Iran will realize that they, too, have a stake in peace and stability and will cease fomenting unrest in the Arab world.

In short, as Peres announces at every opportunity, "It's a new Middle East."

THE dream is so seductive that it seems positively indecent to pose against it the words of the Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi. Here is what he said in a speech on September 1 responding to the news of the Israel-PLO agreement:

> I warn Jews that this is a conspiracy against them. The Palestinian state which is established in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip is a mere stage; the Palestinians will take it as a base for liberating Tel Aviv, Acre, Haifa, and Jaffa. . . .
>
> When the PLO was set up, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip belonged to Arabs. Thus the conflict was for Palestine, not for the West Bank and Gaza. The Arab boycott of the Israelis—the Arab boycott and the Arab League Charter—are based on liberating . . . all Palestine . . . occupied in 1948.
>
> Did the Arabs establish the boycott in 1967? . . . They established it in 1948. Why? Because the conflict was over Palestine, and not only over the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The Arab League Charter calls for liberating Palestine. . . .
>
> This is a stage in which we are establishing the Palestinian state. It will not stop at the liberation of sea towns. Why should we deceive ourselves and the whole world—the whole world or the Jews?

Of course, Qaddafi can be dismissed as a wild man. But consider the following scenario, surely a more realistic one than the rosy vision of "a new Middle East":

A PLO state in the territories will become an improved model of the PLO state in Lebanon before the Israeli incursion of 1982. (When asked if the PLO could run Gaza and Jericho, Arafat said, "We ran all of Lebanon until 1982; Gaza and Jericho will be child's play.") As some observers still remember, the PLO regime in Lebanon, presided over by the very same gentlemen who will be taking power in the West Bank and Gaza, was so corrupt and so savage that even the Syrians were welcomed by the local populace as a relief.

At first, the Western powers and Japan will try to bolster "moderates" with financial support and investments, but a corrupt regime will prove a bottomless pit and neither the Western economies nor the Saudis will be able to afford the drain.

At some point, radical elements in Jordan, encouraged and incited by their newly independent neighbors, will overthrow the Hashemite monarchy and extend the Palestinian state from the Iraqi border to the outskirts of Tel Aviv. (Jordan was part of the British Mandate of Palestine, and the PLO charter defines "Palestine" as demarcated by that Mandate.) Strife between secular and Islamic factions, already brewing, will intensify, with Iraq supporting some and Syria others. Whether Syria or Iraq gains the upper hand, the eastern front against Israel will become more dangerous every day.

Dwarfed Israel, back to its "natural size," as President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt likes to refer to the Jewish state within the 1949 armistice lines, will become an irresistible temptation again, just as it was in 1967. Except that today's Arab armies are far more efficient and sophisticated, and they do not have a friendly-to-Israel, Shah-dominated Iran threatening their backs. Just the opposite: the ayatollahs will support any move they make, as long as it is against Israel.

Shlomo Hillel, one of the very few Labor-party stalwarts who has resisted the idea that "it's a new Middle East" and that Israel can therefore permit the establishment of a Palestinian state and safely return to the 1967 borders, puts the case powerfully:

> It is a big mistake to think of Middle East countries in terms of relations between Belgium and France, Norway and Sweden, or even France and Germany. We are not living here in Europe of the end of the 20th century, but, at best, in Europe of 300 years ago.
>
> I don't believe that the missile age renders territory unimportant. The fact is that the glorious air forces of the U.S., Britain, and France could not destroy the Iraqi Scuds. The only way to prevent such danger is by being present on the ground. Since 1974 the Syrians have not fired at us, not because they are nice people but because we are on the Golan.
>
> A return to the 1967 borders is a return to a constellation which may take us back to the 1967 reality.

True, the Arab states also do not have the backing of the Soviet empire, which they had in 1967 and 1973. But the crumbling of the Soviet empire did not stop Saddam Hussein in 1990, nor has it diminished the access of the radical regimes to modern weaponry. Moreover, the cool calculation and the restraint which the Soviets imposed on these regimes for fear of a superpower conflagration are no longer an inhibiting factor.

Now Saddam Hussein's ally and staunchest supporter will have his headquarters in Jericho—a 30-minute leisurely drive from Jerusalem. And make no mistake: when Arafat and his associates say "Next Year in Jerusalem," they mean it.

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Culture and Capitalism

Joseph Epstein

I HAPPENED the other day to be listening, while in my car, to a tape of a 1940's *Fibber McGee & Molly* radio show. During this particular episode, the McGees were visited by their sweet but milquetoasty neighbor, Mr. Wimple. When asked what he was up to, Mr. Wimple allowed that he was just now doing some writing. Molly McGee, ever commonsensical and intellectually inquisitive, then asked why a certain kind of poetry was called *free verse.* "Gosh, Molly," replied Mr. Wimple, "did you ever try to sell any?"

Mr. Wimple was on to something. Free verse—also, one might add, constrained verse—is still not easy to sell in America, or, for all I know, elsewhere in the world. Let me mention a few other cultural items that are not exactly flying off the shelves, either. Among them would be modern dance, verse drama, much chamber music, highbrow and experimental fiction, opera by contemporary American composers, contemporary musical composition generally. Should such art, under the capitalist system that now rules almost unrivaled round the world, be forced to make its way on its own, as do other products and commodities, its demise would not be in serious question. It would, almost all of it, be gone.

A strict capitalist, the economic equivalent of a fundamentalist in religion, might argue that the inability of art forms to survive in the marketplace is the best indication that they probably do not deserve to survive. Best, our fundamentalist capitalist might conclude, to let sleeping arts, like sleeping dogs, lie. The way we know they are sleeping, the way we know they are (in the market sense) dogs, is that people will no longer pay for them in sufficient numbers and thus make their continued creation worth the while of artists. The market rules; and through the market the people, as in the gladiatorial arena of Rome, register thumbs up or thumbs down.

Fortunately, despite capitalist theorizing, this is rarely the way the most successful practicing capitalists have traditionally behaved. In the United States, there was the generation of astonishingly successful businessmen who are known to political history as the Robber Barons but who ought to be known to cultural history as the Great Benefactors. These men left a vast heritage, off of which many subsequent generations have lived, of universities, visual-arts institutions, symphony orchestras, natural-history museums, planetaria, and a great deal else that continues to supply much of the richness of urban cultural life.

Why did the Morgans, Rockefellers, Fricks, Guggenheims, and the rest—many of them less than refined in the level of their own personal culture—provide so handsomely for the public out of their profits, and in an age before it was prudent, from a tax standpoint, to do so? Sheer guilt is one answer frequently given. But since these men lived before all public actions were strained through the cheesecloth of public relations, guilt has always seemed to me a dubious explanation. The only explanation I find persuasive is a most unFreudian one: whatever their own cultural limitations, these men and their families felt the urge to express their public responsibility through culture, and—weighing in whatever measure of egotism you like—it gave them pleasure to do so.

Historically, from the great merchant princes of Italy to the good burghers of Holland to the business tycoons of the United States, culture has clearly done relatively well under capitalism. Yet there has always been a strong sense, felt among artists and those who have tended to make a religion of art, that capitalism is their enemy. For all who have felt this way—and, with varying degrees of intensity, their ranks would include the vast majority of intellectuals—until recently the hope remained socialism: presumably a more sensitive and creative form of socialism than any the world has hitherto known, but socialism nonetheless. In Oscar Wilde's *The Soul of Man Under Socialism,* the soul in question is plainly that of the artist, for that is what Wildean socialism promises: under socialism the arts will flourish—and why not?, since all will be arranged to provide maximum freedom for the artist.

The fall of Communism, and the almost thorough discrediting of socialist schemes that has gone along with it, has put these dreams in mothballs for a long while. For, whatever else socialism—in its malevolent as well as its relatively benevolent forms—was notable for, it was never

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the production of impressive art. To be sure, no one can accuse the Soviet leaders of not taking artists seriously: they murdered them. And nobody despised socialism more earnestly than those great Russian artists—Vladimir Nabokov, George Balanchine, Aleksander Solzhenitsyn—who saw it up close in its menacing Soviet version. But even under unmurderous forms of socialism—under the limited socialism of England, for example—the arts cannot be said greatly to have flourished. Such forms of socialism have often produced, if not the plain dreariness of Soviet socialist realism, then jeremiads about the drabness of life in the welfare state.

Socialism, then, no longer provides a realistic alternative, except perhaps among the very dreamy. Just now, capitalism, for all its indelicacies, its inefficiencies, even its injustices, reigns supreme. As Churchill said of democracy, so it may now be said of capitalism: "It is the worst form [of economic system] except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time." My title, "Culture and Capitalism," might as easily be Culture and Oxygen—which is another way of saying that capitalism is the atmosphere in which culture must now survive.

Not that the the oxygen-like necessity of capitalism is likely to sway the minds of those artists who have aligned themselves with anti-capitalism. One of the strongest of our cultural traditions is that of the artist deliberately setting out to outrage the comfortable classes: *épater le bourgeois*. This tradition began in earnest in the middle of the 19th century in France with Baudelaire and with Flaubert, whose icy contempt for the bourgeois—his own class—dominates *Madame Bovary*. Those with a taste for *épaté*-ing soon enough extended their targets from Flaubert's provincial shopkeepers and minor officials to include all who were content under the economic system known as capitalism.

Even before this, however, under the pre-capitalist system of aristocratic patronage, making a good living in the arts was never easy, sometimes even for truly superior and prolific artists. Mozart, admittedly an improvident man, was always under great pressure to produce. Given the vast musical treasure that resulted in so brief a life, I would say this was a damn good thing. Still, as Mozart's letters reveal, patronage brought its own difficulties. And everyone recalls Samuel Johnson's famous response of February 7, 1755, to Lord Chesterfield for his too-long-delayed patronage of Johnson's long and lonely work on his *Dictionary*: "The notice which you have been pleased to take of my Labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent and cannot enjoy it, till I am solitary and cannot impart it, till I am known and do not want it." Fifty or so years later, when the young Thomas Carlyle set out on a career of authorship, he knew that "the road to subsistence, I do not mention fame, in that direction is not very clear." Nor, some 175 years later, is it any clearer. Until success arrives—and its attendance record often rivals that of Samuel Beckett's Godot—work in the arts remains precarious.

Lucky, I have always thought, are parents whose children do not choose careers in the arts. They are lucky for two reasons: first, the chances of success are inevitably small; and, second, once a young person is infected with true passion for an art, no other of the world's work ever seems quite as enticing. In his brilliant story, "The Alien Corn," Somerset Maugham describes a young man passionately intent on a career as a concert pianist. After arduous training, it is made persuasively plain to him that musically he can never expect to transcend the mediocre. Soon after he realizes this, the young man repairs to the stables on his family's estate, where he shoots himself. The devastating thing about this story is that, in reading it, Maugham makes you feel he was probably right to do so.

The way of the artist is hard, and that of the would-be, or failed, artist impossible. To become more specific, performing musicians are perhaps the most fortunate in that, even though the competition they face is unrelenting, at least they know fairly early in life whether they have genuine talent. Writers often do not know this till they are forty. (Joseph Conrad published *Almayer's Folly*, his first novel, when he was thirty-eight.) As for visual art, the more it has veered away from the representational and into the abstract and the conceptual, the less sure, I suspect, most young artists must feel about the quality of their own talent. But whatever one's art, setting out, even under the best of conditions, is a great gamble. One is betting on one's talent; on one's determination to stay the course; on the hope that, even with talent and determination, one will eventually be recognized. The state lottery, at times, seems a safer bet.

A few years ago the (London) *Times Literary Supplement* published an essay on the effort of Lord Esher during World War II to save English artists as a previous generation—including Rupert Brooke, Wilfred Owen, Isaac Rosenberg, to name only poets—had not been saved in World War I. Esher met with other well-placed Englishmen to draw up a list, but complications, as one might expect, arose immediately. Ought all arts to be included: architecture, for example, and city planning? Performing as well as creative artists? And if artists were to be saved, what about scientists? Committees of experts were formed and asked to submit names from their own realms of expertise. In the end, the scheme was rejected by the government, on the quite sensible grounds that it was inherently unfair to the rest of the population to allow such advantages even to the authentically talented.

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Of course, the scheme's greatest flaw was that it could do nothing to save the new generation of artists, then in their twenties, who had not yet had time to prove themselves. And here we come to the greatest single stumbling block in all socialist, governmental, or other plans to save or encourage or guide the arts: the almost complete unpredictability of youthful talent. As an occasional university teacher of would-be writers, I fairly regularly encounter young men and women who have what looks to me like that dazzling magical property, true talent. Many of them certainly have vastly more ability at deploying words than I had at their age. Yet, over two decades of observation, I have had to conclude that most among them, however much they think they want to be literary artists, apparently do not want it badly enough. They find themselves choosing other roads, devoting themselves to family, moneymaking, neuroses, and other of life's responsibilities, entanglements, entertainments, and sandtraps. In part, I think of them as possessing, to quote Carlyle again, "a high endowment with an insufficient will." Desire—hot-breathed, unreasonable desire—is missing in them.

The novelist Eudora Welty, in her autobiography, remarks that genuine talent cannot be discouraged, which may or may not be true. What seems to me more true is that it probably cannot be all that much encouraged, either. If you are a young artist, your teachers can assure you that you are greatly gifted; and the more acute among them, if you happen to find them in time, can suggest how you might get the most out of those gifts. Prizes can be awarded to you, thus reinforcing your own belief in your quality; heavy doors can be opened early in your career, thus saving much mental wear and tear in attempting to beat them down on your own. Yet if sometimes adversity crushes an artist, sometimes it brings out the best in him. Because so much in this realm is ambiguous and unpredictable, written in the stars, it is not easy to set out general principles for the care and training of artists, with the exception perhaps of young dancers or performing musicians. Which is a roundabout way of saying that, so long as artists are neither gymnasts nor uncollectivized farms, planning in the arts, as under socialism, was probably never a very good idea in the first place.

I USED to brood a fair amount about these matters while sitting in a large yellow stuffy room at the old Post Office Building in Washington, D.C. during the six years that I served on the National Council of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). The National Council did not make grants, though it had the power—perhaps not often enough exercised—of vetoing them. The Endowment itself has had an annual budget of about $170-million—a mere drop in the bombsight, as proponents of the arts like to claim, in comparison to the immensely greater sums spent on defense and highway programs, but a substantial sum nevertheless.

With so many grants being made, it has not been difficult to find offensive ones, as the press and a vast portion of Americans did in Andres Serrano's photograph of a crucifix in a bottle filled with urine or in Robert Mapplethorpe's sadomasochistic photographs. Among the NEA grants I encountered, I personally found myself more impressed with the extremely absurd than with the deliberately offensive ones; after all, as a good bourgeois, I have been taking a pretty good *épaté*-ing right along, and short perhaps of child sacrifice, the time has passed for being shocked by any of it.

What I mean by the absurd included, for example, a program to bring art into prisons. "Even to death row?" I asked the NEA staff member who had presented the proposal. "You mean to say that you are going to teach art and music appreciation on death row?" The affirmative answer tendered by this hopelessly caring person suggested that my inquiry was extremely insensitive, not to say impertinent.

I also remember a grant application that would bring art to patients with terminal cancer, which I thought not only absurd but at least as obscene as Mapplethorpe's precisely aimed toilet plungers and bullwhips. People dying of cancer have enough to think about without having to contend with the kind of art they are likely to be proffered under the auspices of the NEA. If you sat in that yellow room in Washington long enough, listening to art discussed as if it were religion, medicine, and social reform all rolled into one, you began to understand why it was that Degas said, "We must discourage the arts."

But I also thought a good deal in those days about how little *could* be done—by the federal government, by the sheer force of money—to encourage individual artists, which is where all art ultimately begins and ends. I concluded that if the federal government had to put its thick-fingered hands on the arts, it should do so through what are known as challenge grants to encourage greater private philanthropy in local communities and by making grants to carefully selected institutions. I found myself impressed, too, by grants that bring costly-to-produce art—ballet, say, or orchestral music—to small communities that cannot otherwise afford it. I was less and less impressed with the idea of giving money—even though generally it was not more than $20,000—to poets, painters, and composers to knock off for half a year and produce more of the same kind of stuff they were already producing at perhaps too great a clip.

Yet even if those grants to artists had been ten times larger, would the artists concerned have changed their views of capitalism or of their society? Not very likely. For yet another of our cultural traditions holds that the artist is disenfranchised from birth, a citizen only of his own imagi-

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nation—the original, and perennial, man without a country. Such alienation somehow comes naturally to all but the best artists; and the poorer the artist, I sometimes think, the more naturally it comes.

This stems from the feeling of so many artists that their genius is unappreciated, and it does not help that many people who seem to be not the least bit interested in the arts flourish economically. What kind of a country is it, after all, that will pay a real-estate lawyer $2.6 million a year, while a poet gets $45 for a perfect sestina? If you ever have a couple of hours to spare, ask the poet and he will tell you in some detail what kind of country he thinks it is.

IN CHOOSING a career—a life, really—in the arts, one is presumably ready to give up much that is worldly. Socrates believed that people were divided into three categories: those who wished for pleasure; those who wished for honor, fame, and social success; and those who wished for truth and wisdom. Artists, if not in Socrates' time then surely in our own, are supposed to fall into the last category. But like everyone else, they want the delights available to all three.

Not only do they want these things, they also want to go on *épaté*-ing the rest of us while gathering them in. The view of the avant-garde and its supporters has been that artists must have maximum freedom to do what they want, and deserve to have this freedom underwritten by their government. All must be allowed them because they are artists, and art, like Ovaltine, is good for you. Yet how much stronger their position would be if they risked the marketplace, and did not fall back on public money. Once they accept that money, they are compromised, their claims to absolute freedom greatly diminished. An artist who takes the taxpayers' money to attack the cherished beliefs of taxpayers and then pleads his rights as an artist to do so is pretty much in the position of the young man who murders his parents and then throws himself on the mercy of the court because he is an orphan.

A deep ambivalence if not hypocrisy runs through the contemporary artist's view of capitalism. At the same time that artists tend to be wary of capitalism, many of them realize that a substantial commercial success has set the final seal on some of the most admired artists of our time. In a capitalist society, in fact, one probably feels one has truly arrived as an artist only when one has had a large-public kind of success, which includes recognition as well as financial reward. I do not for a moment say that a commercial and popular success is in any way equivalent to a true artistic success; I do say that, in a capitalist society, the absence of such a success tends to leave a lingering doubt.

These matters would be much simpler if we could conclude that whatever achieves a commercial success under capitalism is, *ipso facto*, inferior cultural goods. Yet the examples of Balanchine, Picasso, Stravinsky, and others in the realm of high and serious art, suggests that even this is not exactly so. Both Picasso and Stravinsky were themselves fairly potent capitalists in their own right. Picasso marketed himself with true genius; and Stravinsky used to prefer to conduct his own works whenever possible so that he would not have to split fees.

Capitalism, it seems to me, shares many qualities with the avant-garde. Neither, in its purest form, is a notable respecter of tradition. Both capitalism and the avant-garde honor, and continually strive to produce, the freshly made. Each is always on the lookout for new opportunities: capitalism for profit, the avant-garde for new forms—many of them, of late, designed not merely to offend but to outrage. Yet when it comes to innovation, capitalism has proved much the more creative force, illustrating Paul Valéry's penetrating remark that "everything changes but the avant-garde."

And herein hangs a sad tale. Because the avant-garde has for some while seemed exhausted, unable to devise any impressively radical changes in technique that look to have enduring value, it has turned to politics, not least to the politics of sexual liberation. No one in the nation would today be offended by NEA grants to artists who wished to compose music without notes, or to use perspective in visual art as it has never been used before, or to revolutionalize English prose style. But such projects, the projects of an older avant-garde, hold almost no interest for the contemporary avant-garde. Its interest lies elsewhere; it lies, specifically, in attacking mainstream American life. Its politics are usually coarse in the extreme. Expressing contempt for Ronald Reagan, for example, counts as an avant-garde activity. It is in large part because the avant-garde has turned so directly political that, at least in the realm of federal funding, it has become so controversial.

I MYSELF have a genuine yet not uncritical admiration for capitalism. While I think capitalism can build character—it encourages hard work, planning, savings, competition, honorable dealings—it has never been known for its niceties of discrimination. Left to its own devices, unfettered capitalism, given half a chance, is likely to chew up the countryside: to erect hideous buildings, to mar natural beauty in the name of profit, to interrupt the peace to sell goods.

In Chicago, we have a superior FM radio station, WFMT, that plays classical music 24 hours a day. It has a relentlessly highbrow tone: over its airwaves, foreign languages are pronounced perfectly; serious music, early and modern along with the canonical works of the 18th and 19th centuries, is played without stint or abridgment; operas are presented in their entirety, often in live "si-

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mulcast" productions. The station, which is the radio equivalent of cable television, claims an audience of half-a-million listeners. Its expenses cannot be low, and it survives on revenues from commercials.

For many years WFMT ran only commercials read by its announcers, in the most culturally earnest and modulated of voices. Then a few years ago, feeling the economic crunch, the station began to run "canned" commercials. As I am no enemy of capitalism, neither, I hope, am I an aesthetic prig, but I have to report that I found these commercials repellent in the extreme. I can take—have come to expect—endless beer, car, and even hemorrhoid-preparation commercials interrupting television sports events or movies. These are necessary evils, and I, for one, understand their necessity more than I believe in their evil. But after listening to, say, Schubert piano impromptus or a group of Reynaldo Hahn songs, it is not easy to have to attend to jingles about the friendly skies of United or a too-clever-by-half spiel for the new Lexus. Listeners began first to complain and then to organize. I shall not recount the full struggle here, but in the end the listeners won. The canned commercials were outlawed, the general musical seriousness of the station maintained. All this was made possible chiefly through financial contributions from devoted listeners, for whom the price of high culture has thereby gone up.

The price of high culture, I would guess, is going to go up a good bit more all around. The star system among concert performers has driven up ticket prices for an Itzhak Perlman or Yo Yo Ma concert or an appearance by Luciano Pavarotti or Placido Domingo in an opera, while also draining off interest in first-class musical performers who do not have "superstar" standing. The prospect grows less and less likely that a person of upper-middle-class income will be able to own an original work of art by even a moderately well-known painter or sculptor.

Of course, some art, and some of the very best art, is simply unmarketable because it is, in the nature of the case, small-public art. One is reminded of the time that Edith Wharton arrived at Rye in the south of England to pick up Henry James in one of her splendid Panhard automobiles. The car, she told James, had been purchased from the royalties earned by her last novel. Not one to let an opportunity for ironic response pass, James is reported to have pointed to a nearby wheelbarrow, which he claimed he had purchased from the royalties of *his* last novel, and then added that he planned to have it painted with the royalties from his next.

James once remarked that he liked gold, and plenty of it, but, despite occasional high expectations—for such novels as *The Bostonians* and *The Princess Casamassima* and then later for the New York edition of his fiction—he never came close to earning much more of it than made possible his bachelor upkeep, and even this, toward the end, became a stretch. I would argue that this situation was not the fault of Henry James (who did not, thank goodness, know how to lower his artistic sights), or of his publishers, or of the economic system (capitalism) under which he wrote. If blame need be assigned, the fault is God's for not making more readers intellectually fit to read Henry James.

WE KNOW that under the crushing political power of the Communist party in the Soviet Union and its satellites, artists could only create (badly) in support of the regime or create (bravely and at great personal price) against it. Few had the good fortune to create precisely as they might have liked. Capitalism, though tough on artists when they are young—it is tough on everyone when young, except those lucky enough to have inheritances—leaves them the widest margins to create as they wish. Sometimes capitalism seems arbitrary in those artists it chooses to reward, conferring a large success on difficult work, or, with a heavy-handed irony, seeming kindest to those who show the most contempt for it. But this much may be said for capitalism: operating under it, artists know that finally they are in business for themselves—a condition, one would have thought, to which every good artist aspires.

The high aspirations of the artist, and the high valuation he puts on himself, remind me that I once told a joke to a conservative economist about an airplane in grave difficulty whose pilot has to ask one of the passengers to leave in order to lighten the load, thus making it possible to land the plane safely. The pilot explains, over the public-address system, that he and the crew are going to ask that person to leave who is of the least use to society. The punch line runs: "At which point, a used-car dealer and a disc jockey get up in the middle of the aisle and begin fighting." Complete silence was the response from the economist, who finally said: "I would have liked that joke better if the punch line was, 'At which point a psychotherapist and the curator of a museum of contemporary art get up in the middle of the aisle and begin fighting.'" His punch line may be not only funnier but truer.

"I believe in the salvation of humanity through art," wrote the composer and music critic Cecil Gray in his autobiography. I guess that I, finally, do not. I love art; apart from family and friends, nothing in life is so important to me; and I am grateful to have been able to arrange my life so that I can spend a greater part of it than most people, indulging myself in the splendors and delights of others' artistic production. But however necessary to some of us art remains, it is well to remember that, in the larger perspective, art is a luxury—the luxury of luxuries—and one that is only earned by societies which, in the fundamental sense of the phrase, first take care of business.

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Can American Democracy Survive?

Bruce D. Porter

After two centuries and 41 presidents, it is perhaps understandable that we take for granted today what remains the greatest political miracle of all time: the United States of America. The miracle consists not only in the remarkable circumstances of the country's birth, but in the fact that this most heterogeneous and diverse population, having no common origin and no obvious basis for unity, has nonetheless endured as a unified nation through over two centuries of massive change, including a civil war, two world wars, several economic depressions, and the strains of industrialization, immigration, and sweeping territorial expansion. What is more, the astonishing vitality of the American republic unfolded within the framework of a constitution of fewer than 7,000 words, drafted by a committee of patrician landowners in only four months, and rarely amended since. If the United States is not a miracle, then nothing of a political nature can possibly merit the term.

Longevity, of course, promotes presumptions of permanence. Despite having witnessed the collapse of one superpower widely believed to be infrangible, we devote hardly a thought to the prospects for stability and survival of the other. Few would deny that the United States has serious problems, but since those problems are still dealt with through a process of consent and compromise that has worked—with only one systemic breakdown—for over 200 years, we are inclined to assume that the United States will continue to endure.

The immediate, though by no means only, cause for questioning that assumption is the end of the cold war, which places the United States in the same position it faced after the War of 1812, the Mexican War, the Civil War, and World War I. Suddenly, the country has no serious enemies and faces no military threat from abroad. In similar situations in the past, American unity has waned. Will the same thing now happen again? Will the end of a half-century of superpower rivalry and proxy wars abroad mark the beginning of a new turbulence within America itself?

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One sign that the end of the cold war may have profound repercussions at home can be seen in the political problems of our cold-war allies. In Italy, the postwar political system has been discredited by massive scandal. Elsewhere in Western Europe, François Mitterrand, Helmut Kohl, and John Major have sunk to record lows in opinion polls. In Japan, the monopoly of the Liberal Democratic party on power has been broken for the first time since World War II. Across the entire band of countries who jointly fought the cold war, political incumbents are being challenged as never before; the status quo is increasingly under siege. And indeed, with the West no longer mobilized on the front lines of a grand ideological crusade, it is only logical that nations would turn inward to bicker over their domestic problems, many of which were neglected in the pursuit of international victory.

The United States will not escape this process. A diverse and continent-spanning society that is suddenly no longer faced by foreign threats will likely find that its own internal cleavages are greater than anyone suspected. This is all the more to be expected because the United States is the one great power, besides the former Soviet Union, whose internal cohesion has been based on adherence to a common political ideology rather than on ethnic or national homogeneity.

Most probably the end of the cold war would not, by itself, generate a sufficient tidal force to threaten the survival of American democracy. But it will greatly increase the strains on our political system just as other centrifugal forces, long building, are tearing at the fabric of American society.

The first of these centrifugal forces is a crisis of American identity, caused by the vigorous assertion of subnational loyalties above a common, unifying bond.

In the past, the peculiar genius of American democracy was its success in divorcing national identity and political rights from personal pedigree. American nationality and the national feeling associated with it were from the beginning linked not to national origin, religion, or even language, but to abstract ideals of liberty, human rights, representative government, and the equality of all human beings. Nationality in the new republic was based on documents, not on ances-

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try. Hence, for most of American history, anyone arriving on American shores could become an American; and once this happened, his "Americanness" took precedence over his national origins. This was the essence of the American miracle and an absolute key to the preservation and vitality of the United States.

Admittedly, immigrants often faced discrimination, and, of course, the melting pot failed miserably for black Americans—most of whom did not arrive here of their own free will and who even after the abolition of slavery were not permitted to assimilate into American society or enjoy the full rights of citizenship. Though Reconstruction officially ended in 1876, the tragic fact is that well before then, the population of the Northern states had lost interest in defending the rights of former slaves in the South. The liberators abandoned the liberated to a century of oppression, prejudice, and second-class citizenship. The roots of the mounting crisis of American identity that now faces us can be traced to this enormous moral failing, which short-circuited the process of national integration at its most critical moment.

The civil-rights movement of the 1960's finally brought home to millions of white Americans the magnitude of the injustices that had been perpetrated on black Americans for over a century, notwithstanding the abolition of slavery. The response was an understandable rush to overcome the effects of this lost century through governmental action, including preferential programs intended to compensate for past injustices. While the civil-rights movement itself had been both integrationist and inclusive in thrust, many of these later programs deliberately emphasized racial awareness, ethnic identity, and group preference. Eventually they came to encompass not only black Americans, but other ethnic—and gender—categories as well.

Thus, by the 1980's, perhaps a majority of the American population in one way or another fell under the rubric of "disadvantaged minority," and great political and economic benefits could be achieved by emphasizing one's identification with a specific group so designated. Political rights came to be seen as group benefits, rather than as universal rights to which all Americans were equally entitled. Whether or not affirmative action and the related programs which grew out of it advanced the fortunes of minority Americans (or at least of minority elites), they certainly stimulated a powerful reassertion of subnational loyalties. These now threaten to be exalted over any common sense of American nationality or identity. And without a common sense of "Americanness," the threads holding together this most diverse of republics will become thin indeed.

The end of the cold war will exacerbate this crisis of national identity in a number of ways. For one thing, after every major war of this century, racial tensions have worsened. Is there any reason to suppose that the cold war will be any different, particularly given the acute sense of separate identities that is emerging? It may be that the Los Angeles riot of 1991—which followed shortly after the national celebration of victory in the Persian Gulf—was a harbinger of things to come.

Second, the scaling down of the U.S. Army and other of the armed services means a contraction of the very institution which, for over 40 years now, has been most successful in integrating and elevating blacks and other minorities. In the Persian Gulf war, the nation's senior military officer was a black American, and 33 percent of all enlisted personnel and officers were minorities. Nor are we talking only about front-line troops; as a proportion of persons assigned to various occupational specialties in the military, there is a higher ratio of blacks in medical, administration, communications, and service-support functions than in combat specialties. This has been achieved in a highly meritocratic institution in which advancement is based on performance, not group preference. The downsizing of the armed forces will thus curtail one of the largest and best channels for minorities to climb from inner-city poverty to self-reliant independence. It is one of the more unfortunate consequences of our reduced international position.

Finally, since Pearl Harbor, Americans have tended to set aside their partisan differences at the ocean's edge; to a lesser extent, the same can be said of separate group identities. But just as partisanship is waxing stronger in the aftermath of the U.S.-Soviet rivalry, our common American identity will also lose the unifying focus that flowed from the foreign-policy challenges of the past five decades. New and serious challenges face us abroad, but they may not be sharply defined enough to elicit a similar unifying response. Ironically, then, our failure to exert leadership in the Balkans may only hasten our own Balkanization.

A second incipient crisis of American democracy is that of declining governability—the incapacity of our political institutions to resolve or even mitigate the complex economic and social problems that face us. In particular, the failure of Congress or the executive branch to deal effectively with the deficit problem fuels public perceptions of paralysis. At some point, if these perceptions continue or increase, they will almost inevitably translate into demands for radical—and not necessarily thoughtful—constitutional reform.

The failure to reduce the deficit, despite numerous highly publicized efforts beginning with the Gramm-Rudman amendment of 1986, does not stem entirely from a lack of political leadership in both parties. It also arises out of deeply-

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rooted structural problems that make traditional political solutions unworkable.

The first of these structural obstacles might be called the "scissors dilemma" of the welfare state. It derives from the fact that recessions *simultaneously* reduce revenue and increase welfare outlays (hence the analogy of closing scissors). This forces the federal government either to borrow heavily or to raise taxes to maintain its welfare commitments. But since increased debt is always eventually repaid by taxation, the long-term effect is to increase the government's share of gross domestic product (GDP).

Over the long run and beyond a certain threshold, an increasing government share of GDP acts as a drag on national productivity and contributes to declining growth rates, thereby further exacerbating the scissors dilemma. It will be aggravated still more by the changing demographic profile of the country—an aging population with a higher ratio of pensioners to workforce will drive up welfare costs while shrinking the national revenue base.

Another structural problem is what might be termed the "benefits-ratchet effect." Redistributive benefits, once given, are politically almost impossible to revoke, even when their costs spiral far beyond original projections. Neither the Gramm-Rudman amendment, nor the Bush deficit-reduction proposals, nor the Clinton budget package recently passed by Congress has addressed the problem of skyrocketing growth in entitlement programs—money which the federal government is required by law to dispense according to rigid formulas that are defended to the hilt by the groups that benefit from them. Only a few of these entitlements are aimed solely at the indigent—most stretch their largesse high up into the middle class and beyond—which is precisely why they have proved impossible to cut. The constituency of beneficiaries has become too large for most political leaders to risk offending.

From which flows still another structural problem—the "electability dilemma." As public anger with Washington rises, the risks of incumbency increase, making legislators more, not less, cautious about doing anything to alienate voters essential to victory at the polls.

The Clinton budget has not dented these structural barriers to change; in fact, it does precisely what was done in past deficit-reduction packages: postpone all serious cuts to a later date (many of which will be reversed in the end); leave entitlements (the growth of which continues unabated) virtually unscathed; and base all projections on optimistic assumptions of growth and revenue, including the assumption that potential revenue sources will not flee to available tax shelters.

The result of all this is a deficit that is intractable and certain to remain high, a deficit whose causes are completely bipartisan and have nothing to do with which party has occupied the White House or has had a majority in Congress since 1980 or before. Nor could it come at a less propitious time, given the strains on national unity already outlined above. Either the rising factionalism of the post-cold-war era will prevent a solution, or the solution will be so painful as further to aggravate our social divisions.

Reasonable persons may differ over the economic implications of the deficit; many have argued that a $6-trillion economy ought to be able to sustain a $200- to $300-billion deficit indefinitely. But the real implications of the problem are political, not economic. The deficit affects all facets of American government, curtailing the policy options available to national leaders. On the one hand, it has already swallowed up the "peace dividend" that proponents of social spending had hoped to tap. On the other hand, it will force continued cuts in defense spending and thereby make it difficult to sustain American military power: we will withdraw from the world as much for want of money as for want of will.

Rising public resentment over the failure of Washington to address the deficit has already spawned both the anti-incumbent movement and the Ross Perot phenomenon. Other challenges to the status quo no doubt lie ahead—new political ideologies, other charismatic leaders, third-party movements, voter-mobilization drives, term-limitation efforts, recalls and referenda at the state and local level, and campaigns for constitutional reform, including attempts to call a constitutional convention under Article V of the Constitution. None of this will necessarily be destabilizing—some of it may even be healthy and necessary—but it does suggest that a volatile political decade or more lies ahead of us.

LASTLY there is the crisis of American values. Every society, however pluralistic it may be, however much it may tolerate and respect divergent viewpoints and styles, must nevertheless have some common set of values to anchor its institutions. Tocqueville acknowledged this in the first volume of *Democracy in America*:

> I will never admit that men constitute a social body simply because they obey the same head and the same laws. Society can exist only when a great number of men consider a great number of things under the same aspect, when they hold the same opinions upon many subjects, and when the same occurrences suggest the same thoughts and impressions to their minds.

This does not mean that social stability requires unanimity or that everyone in a society should be expected to hold to the same views and values or lead a common life. It means only that in any society capable of functioning as a society, there will always be *some* values that the vast majority will accept and defend, regardless of their other differences.

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Yet the past three or four decades have witnessed a shift in influential sectors of American society away from a commitment to such values and toward an overarching moral relativism that simply refuses to admit that *any* point of view can possibly have greater validity than any other. In our universities—and even in many of our churches—basic American political values are regularly, even stridently, dismissed as instruments of repression by the reigning power structure, having no intrinsic moral worth or legitimacy. And in our schools the failure to defend and teach basic standards of civil behavior is resulting in a generation incapable of drawing moral distinctions—a generation devoid of any sense of what is right or wrong, or that there may even *be* a right or a wrong. A *1,740-percent* increase in the number of children and teenagers treated for knife and gunshot wounds since 1986 cannot possibly be attributed to poverty or rising racism alone. It suggests, rather, that a society which treats almost every form of behavior as no better or worse than any other will be unable to make a strong enough case even against violence.

WE ARE, then, entering a season of sharpening internal strains, during which the United States may be as badly divided along partisan, class, ethnic, gender, and ideological lines as it was along sectional lines in the 1850's. In a polity that has no purely national basis to fall back on, such cleavages may portend serious and even violent upheaval. If the above trends were to continue unabated, they would eventually lead to the destabilization of our political system and its replacement either by unrelieved anarchy or a more authoritarian form of rule.

But even assuming that large-scale political upheaval is averted, we are bound to witness a difficult period of growing public alienation from the political process, rising racial tensions and unrest in the inner cities, partisan and ideological acrimony, deepening social divisions, escalating violence among the young, political radicalism on our campuses, one-term presidents, and breathtaking political turmoil.

We may also see a variety of attempts to solve all these problems through foreign diversion: finding or inventing enemies (Japan is a likely candidate) against which united efforts can be directed. But unless we are forced to resolve our differences by the rise of a genuine military adversary—an eventuality no sane person could possibly hope for—there can be little doubt that a turbulent domestic storm lies ahead. When it breaks, it may take miracles of leadership as great as any we have witnessed in the past to keep the miracle of this venerable democracy alive.

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The Persians
A Story

Allegra Goodman

In memory of Marion Magid

ED GOES all the way to the campus mailroom to sign for his registered letter. He had complained about it over lunch, and said it was inconvenient, but as soon as he left the café, he went over to get the thing. He has been receiving a great deal of mail recently as well as phone calls: requests for comments on radio and television. In the wake of the bombing at the World Trade Center, Ed is in demand as a terrorism expert—and working at Georgetown makes him accessible, too. This very afternoon he is having a pre-interview with a radio producer from *Talk of the Times*. Over lunch he brushed off jokes that the letter was an invitation to the White House, but walking to the mailroom, he has no trouble believing it's from the Feds. He has received letters from the CIA in the past, although they were not particularly dramatic.

The letter is from Iran, on stationery with the letterhead in Persian. It is typed in English, and it reads:

In the Name of the Most High
Most Respectable Scholar,
Professor E. Markowitz:

Salaamon Alaikom—With our wholehearted greeting:

We acknowledge the estimable occasion to inform your highness that the "Celebration Congress of the Great and Glorified Divine Mystic Mullah Sadra" will be held in the City of Isfahan from 1st to 6th Zelqadan.

Hereby, we find it most timely to request to know when we may enjoy your high presence. Most pleasurably we will be informed that your excellency are leaving for Iran at the soonest possible convenience. As such, we may make preparations regarding the provision of tickets and rooms in the ancient city of Isfahan, of which it is said: *Isfahan nisf Jahan*—Isfahan is half the world.

With greatest respect for your graciousness,
Dr. V.P. Jamil
The Secretary
The Committee of the Celebration Congress

Ed has never seen a call for papers in quite this form. He stands there in the mailroom and reads it through twice. The glorified divine mystic Mullah Sadra is certainly not within his area of expertise, and he can't imagine where they got his name. It is a little frightening, although it is also proof that he is developing a truly international reputation. These are heady times for him; he is being sought on many levels. But it is the language of the letter that rings in his ears and puts a skip in his step as he walks back to his office. In this day and age, when one's graduate students call up and ask for "Ed"—the undergraduates waiting for only the slightest encouragement to follow suit—it is undeniably a delight to be referred to in the royal plural and to be called excellency. There is, perhaps, a courtier in every scholar; especially in those like Ed who study the modern world and do not have a chance to savor the past.

He paces around his office, waiting for his three o'clock phone call from the radio producer, Jill Bordles. He sorts the papers on his two desks, moving offprints from one pile to another. It's a large cluttered office with pictures on the wall of Sarah and the children. "This is my daughter who's getting married this summer," he will say to visitors, although the description does not match the picture of Miriam in her band uniform. The phone rings.

"Professor Markowitz," Jill Bordles says. "Hi. How are you?"

"Oh, fine," he says. "Busy. How are you?"

"I'm great. Let me tell you how we do this. It's really just a chance to find out about you and your work. To ask you some questions."

"OK, shoot."

"I have a paper here you wrote in 1989, 'The Terrorist as Other.' You say here that our very attempts to understand the terrorist are already compromised by hidden assumptions that the terrorist is alien to us. That his morals and motives could never be shared by any of us in the civilized world."

"That's exactly right," Ed tells her. "And that's what puts us into a bind, because many of us have a double standard. In the Jewish community, for example, we refuse to see that the birth of Israel was facilitated by terrorist acts. The terrorist who acts against our own established political and so-

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cial institutions is an alien and a renegade; we refuse to see him in our own history. In essence, we refuse to see the terrorist in ourselves."

"And so," Bordles says, "when we learn American history in school we don't read about something like the Boston Tea Party as a terrorist act—because it has become part of our myth about ourselves."

"Yes. Absolutely. Although, of course, strictly speaking, terrorism as a concept was invented in the 19th century by Georges Sorel and put into practice by the *Narodnaya Volya* movement in Russia. But to speak about it in a more general way, then, absolutely. Something like the Boston Tea Party is a perfect example of my point. This is a heroic event for us from the third grade on. The destruction of English property never becomes an issue in the classroom. We don't think of it as a terrorist act at all. And yet, when we look at it closely, we find insurgency, secrecy, and sabotage—the three fundamentals of terrorist activity. And so what we are practicing in the classroom is a perfect case of sublimating the act to our iconography—or, in other words, what we are teaching is that the ends justify the means if the end is the United States."

"Professor Markowitz," Bordles asks, "do you then excuse something like the bombing of the Trade Center in New York?"

"This is a question that we have to examine in its complexity," Ed says. "And so I prefer to use the word 'understand,' rather than the word 'excuse.' This is what I think we all have to learn. We have to recognize our own contradictions. What have we allowed and excused in ourselves? What kind of rhetoric do we use to cloak our own rebellion, our own battles, our own invasions—the genocide and slavery in our own history? Then, with self-knowledge, we can look at the culture that produces the terrorist; we have to understand his—or her—mores and motivations."

"One country's terrorist is another's freedom fighter," Bordles quotes from Ed's book.

"You've really done your homework," Ed says.

"Oh, well, it's my job," she tells him modestly.

"I'm impressed."

"No, I was fascinated by your book. Particularly with one point—" he can hear her leafing through the pages. "There is a very subtle point you make here in chapter six, where you say that, on the one hand, we have to understand that our own culture and history are rooted in violence, and not merely in the myth of pacifism and agrarian isolation that we promote. But, on the other hand, we have to avoid judging the terrorists of the Muslim world by the strictures of our own Judeo-Christian tradition as it is institutionalized in America."

"Yes, you are really getting to the heart of it there. You really put your finger on it." Ed is warming to his subject. "We have to look very carefully at the insurgents we call aliens. It is vital for us to examine the 'Other' in order to understand ourselves. But at the same time, we have to remember that the terrorist really is alien to us—his otherness is real, and his world is different from ours—and here's my point: if we can learn about ourselves from great, generous liberal minds like Tocqueville or Crèvecoeur, then we can learn from the terrorist as well. And if we have trouble with the parallel, then that says a great deal about us, and what we are willing to find in the mirror the 'Other' presents to us. We have to be willing to broaden our reading of the responses to America, and move beyond the classics of democratic ideology to think about what these visceral reactions by terrorists tell us about America and its policies, its military might."

He has not quite finished, but Bordles interjects, "Professor Markowitz, I want to thank you for your time. I think you are going to be our perfect guest because you have the kind of expertise and the kind of balance that we're looking for—not just in the political sense, but as a scholar."

"Listen, it's a pleasure," Ed says. "And feel free, if you want to ask any other questions; just give me a call."

"We'll be looking forward to seeing you on Friday."

OVER dinner Ed tells his wife Sarah, "She really read my book. It was very flattering. She was quoting me, chapter and verse."

"I like the letter," Sarah says, looking at it lying on the table next to her plate. "Are you going?"

"You want me to go to Iran?" Ed asks.

"Of course not. We still have to pick up that present for Katie Passachoff," she informs him.

"I thought we said we weren't going to that bat mitzvah," Ed says.

"No, we're going."

"Oh, why?" he groans. "After a week like this I have to get up on Saturday and drive out to Shaarei Tzedek for the whole day?"

"We discussed this a month ago," Sarah says unruffled. "We're supposed to look at their band for the wedding."

"Just look? Do they play any instruments or do they just stand there?"

"You know what I mean. They're having Phil's Harmonic, and they're supposed to be wonderful according to Liz Passachoff."

"Oh, right, the Phil's Harmonic with what's-his-face."

"With Phil!"

"What a terrible name for a band. What's his last name?"

"Katz."

"Well, why didn't he do something with Katz? The Katzenjammer Kids or something."

"I thought we'd pick up a book for her tomorrow," Sarah says.

"All right." He sighs. "I'm just exhausted, and I've still got to prepare my lecture. But you know,"

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he says as he gets up from the table, "I had a pretty high-level discussion with that woman from public radio. I formulated some things on the phone that I had never really articulated in quite that way before. This sort of interview situation really—it really gets the thought processes rolling."

"Well, good," Sarah says. "And hereby I find it most timely for you to unload the dishwasher."

ED STAYS up until almost midnight preparing his lecture, and Sarah is sleeping by the time he gets to bed. He usually tosses and turns, but tonight he falls asleep almost at once, and he begins to dream. He is working in an Islamic scholar's garden, kneeling at a low desk. The arched windows are surrounded with intricate carvings, the garden itself exquisitely planted with flowers surrounding a fountain tiled in blue, purple, and green. The surface of his desk is like silk. However, on top of the desk he finds his familiar lecture notes, and he is sitting in Sarah's orthopedic chair with the knee rest which is supposed to take the weight off your back.

He gets out of the chair with some difficulty and walks into a larger courtyard planted entirely with agapanthus in different shades of purple and lavender. There is a larger fountain here, the mosaic at the bottom flecked with gold. As he walks, he passes from one garden into another, each more splendid than the last. He is alone, except for a pair of peacocks who swish the gravel as they walk. The day passes, and he walks through a hundred gardens. He is lost and cannot find his way out. Then, to his horror, night falls. A velvet curtain literally covers the sky, the soft fabric embroidered with pearls.

At this point he stirs and realizes that Sarah has thrown the comforter over his head. He wrestles with it and heaves it onto the floor. When he settles down again he is still in the maze of gardens. However, he has found the registration table for the Celebration Congress. The other participants are milling around with drinks, and they include Liz and Arnie Passochoff with their daughter, the bat-mitzvah girl. He looks for his name tag and finds that it is printed in gold in both Persian and English and reads: "His gracious Edward Markowitz, Table 15."

Then he realizes that he has left his lecture notes in the scholar's garden. Of course, he is not foolish enough to go back for them. He walks up to the conference chairman, who is sitting behind the registration table and wears black-rimmed glasses. "I want to give my lecture extemporaneously," he says.

"Everything will be as you desire," the chairman tells him. "Please accept your copy of the conference proceedings." He then gives Ed a book bound in gold cloth. Ed sees that it is an exhibition catalogue, and that each plate depicts a miniature painting of one of the gardens he has walked through. There is the fountain flecked with gold. There is the courtyard of agapanthus. He reads in the catalogue notes:

> What can we say when we look at this consummate craftsmanship? These gemlike colors? We are confounded by the miniaturist's artistry: he takes us into the garden itself, as if we were walking along its paths or listening to the play of a living fountain. This illumination, merely three inches high, is one of the loveliest landscapes on the face of God's earth.

It's Henry, Ed realizes. It's his brother Henry, in England, who put together this conference and wrote these notes. Only Henry habitually refers to "the face of God's earth," as if the world were a grandfather clock. He of the exquisite taste and the musty collections. Who has been nagging Ed for years to write a book about Islamic culture, despite the fact that, as Henry knows perfectly well, Ed's area is politics and modern history. It was his brother who arranged this invitation, not to modern Iran, but to Persia.

Ed wakes up shivering. He does not remember any of the dream except for the thought that his brother has orchestrated the conference invitation. Could it be? Has Henry, living as he does on the fringes of academic Oxford, met someone at the Oriental Institute and given him Ed's name? Ed gets out of bed and washes his face. Henry probably had nothing to do with the letter from Iran. It was just that the letter reminded him of his brother. It was mannered; it was antique. Henry loves that sort of thing. He has always chosen the Old World, just as Ed has chosen the New. He likes to think of it that way, although, in fact, Henry is a businessman and it is Ed who works as a scholar. He goes downstairs to breakfast. He doesn't spend a great deal of time thinking about his brother. Or at least he tries not to. Henry's aesthetic transports exhaust him. The letter is still lying on the kitchen table where Sarah left it, and Ed folds it up and puts it on the stack of bills in the hall. He checks and sees that his lecture notes are in his briefcase where he left them.

After work that day, Sarah picks him up and insists that they go to the campus bookstore to get the present for Katie Passachoff. She reminds him: "You said tomorrow is out, and Friday you have that radio thing."

"Is it really necessary for both of us to get this present?"

"I'm tired of buying gifts and getting criticized later," she says.

"All I said was I thought it would be more appropriate to get a Jewish book for this kind of event." The two of them have been going to a lot of bar and bat mitzvahs in the past few months. Their friends waited longer to have children, and now Ed and Sarah have to go through these milestones again.

They go to the Judaica section of the bookstore and find several Haggadahs, *The Big Book of Jewish Humor*, and a coffee-table book called

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Great Jews in Music. "I was thinking more of a novel," Sarah says.

"All right, look through fiction. Find a few possibilities." Ed strides off and starts pulling books off the shelves. He prides himself on getting in and out of a store quickly. After a few minutes he has three books. "OK, pick one of these," he says. "We've got *Goodbye, Columbus*—"

She shakes her head.

"This is a classic coming-of-age story!"

"No. I don't think it's the right thing."

"What are you talking about?"

"Ed, for you its a coming-of-age story. She's a girl, and she's not living in the 50's."

"Well, excuse me!" Ed says. "OK, we have the stories of Isaac Bashevis Singer."

"Oh, no."

"What?"

"Singer is not for a twelve-year-old."

"This is a nice hard-back book," Ed protests.

"He's kinky," says Sarah.

"He's a great writer!"

"He's obsessed with defloration! That is not an appropriate gift."

"Fine. Then we've got *The Adventures of Augie March.* Now this is a great book."

"It's too hard for a twelve-year-old."

"OK, either it's too hard or it's too kinky. So what do you have? Oh, very original. *The Diary of Anne Frank.* And what's this? I thought we said Jewish books. *Little Women*? Sarah! You're accusing me of living in the past. Talk about the 50's. You're dealing with the 1850's here."

"I was thinking about her age level," Sarah says.

"I thought we were looking for a great Jewish novel. I find classic Jewish literature and I get vetoed. Then you come up with *Little Women*?" He looks at her standing there with her big purse. He realizes that this is what she must have been reading when she was twelve, and he thinks it's sweet. "Let's try again," he says, and they turn back to the shelves.

"Oh—Chaim Grade," she exclaims. "He's wonderful. *My Mother's Sabbath Days.*"

"God, no," Ed says.

"Too sad?"

"It's only the saddest thing I've ever read. I couldn't even finish it. Tell me something, why do we have to get her a Holocaust book?"

"Who said anything about the Holocaust?"

"Everything you come up with is a Holocaust book. You're honing in on them."

Sarah looks up. "I am not! I'm just looking for the Jewish ones."

They spend half an hour combing the shelves and arguing. In the end, they buy *The Diary of Anne Frank* and *Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman.*

WHEN they get home and drop their bags on the kitchen table, Ed says, "I'm absolutely sure Henry got those people to invite me to Iran."

"Who does he know in Iran?" Sarah asks.

"He knows everyone! He's a professional—"

"Raconteur?"

"*Yente.* He probably met someone in an antique store, or at the Ashmolean, or the Radcliffe Camera, or at some society or other. He's a member of everything. And he got talking to some kind of Iranian and he volunteered me to give a paper. He told them all about me and my work and now I'm in their records."

"In Iran?"

"Sure, they're reading up on me over there." Ed paces around the kitchen.

Sarah waves this away and makes herself a pot of coffee.

"How much do you want to bet he wangled this somehow?"

"You're going to call and ask him?"

"No, I'm not going to call him."

"Why not?" Sarah asks.

"Because whenever I call he gets hysterical because he thinks something has happened to Ma."

"Well, Ed, with you it's a reasonable assumption."

"So he could call me once in a while."

This conversation plays through his mind that night as he is falling asleep, and he dreams about his brother. He is in Henry's apartment in Oxford with its dark upholstery and clutter of books. "Henry," Ed says, "you gave my name to the Persians and now they are sending for me."

"Dear Edward," Henry says. "How marvelous!" He is standing in a scarlet-and-green smoking jacket, with matching quilted slippers and a fez on his head, its gold tassel hanging down. "Did they send you letters? It's like something from Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes.* Did I ever show you my edition? It's exquisite. Look at this engraving, with the Persians arriving at the French court, gazing at those Parisian clothes and those powdered headdresses. Here is one of them sitting at the table with her quill and her little travel desk, writing a letter back to Persia. This is the original 18th-century binding. Do you know how much this cost? Don't even ask."

"OK, I won't."

Henry looks disappointed. "When are you leaving?"

"I'm not going to Persia," Ed tells him.

"But they're expecting you!"

"Don't you understand that it's dangerous?" Ed demands. "We're talking about a theocracy governed by Islamic absolutists!"

"But Edward, how many people have this kind of opportunity? And think of the book you could write. Not just a book about them, but a book to them: *Lettres Persanes* in reverse, where *you* would be the exotic!"

"What do you think I am, an anthropologist?" Ed demands. "If anyone is going to be exotic, that would have to be you."

Henry reddens. "But I thought you would en-

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joy Persia. I wasn't going to say anything about it, but I went to a lot of trouble arranging that invitation. It was going to be a surprise for your birthday. Susan and I gave it a great deal of thought. We had planned to get you the new OED on disk, but I began to think about it—taking all that rich language and condensing it on that little disk like synthesized music. I thought since you wrote about understanding the Other, you could write your next book on becoming the Other."

"I'm not interested in becoming the Other," Ed says. "I'll leave that to you and your expatriate friends."

Henry pours Ed a cup of tea. "Edward, please don't be upset. I thought if you could go over there and sit down with them, then you could work out our problems, because you understand the Arab mind."

"I don't even understand you," Ed tells him. "I have no idea what's going on in the Arab mind."

"Isn't that what you should be finding out?"

"Not in person," Ed mumbles. "What is this, the hundredth time I'm telling you? Iranians are not Arabs; they're Persians."

He walks out of the room, and finds himself in his mother's apartment in Venice, California. Rose also pours him a cup of tea, and she offers him chocolate-covered chocolate Girl Scout cookies. "They came to the door, so I had to buy them," she says. "Have some, dear. But I want to tell you something about the Persians. They are no friends of Israel. Esther was a beautiful girl, and she did the best she could, but it was a mixed marriage. No one talks about King Ahasuerus converting. I think he did not. I got you a couple of things for the trip. Wilton frozen dinners. Very expensive, so eat them. And sucking candy for the plane. And also I clipped William Safire for you from the *Times*, about how the international terrorists are all operating out of New York because we have such civil liberties."

"Yeah, I saw that one already," Ed says.

"And what did you think?" Rose asks. "The Arab *mujahideen* from Lebanon are getting Egyptian passports in the Sudan and Iranian *meshugoyim* are infiltrating Paramus and Oklahoma City."

"Alarmist, as usual."

"He's a beautiful writer," Rose says, looking over the clipping. "I'd like to see you someday writing a column like that. Especially on Sundays, when he writes about the English language. It's just beautiful." Ed wakes with a start. The dream flashes before him and then vanishes.

ED DRIVES to the studio for the *Talk of the Times* interview. Jill Bordles ushers him in and introduces him to the other guest, Georges Zaghlul, a Lebanese Christian Ed has met several times before. The two of them sit on either side of the moderator, Bob Kennedy. At exactly three o'clock, Kennedy announces to the radio audience. "Hello, it's foreign-affairs Friday on *Talk of the Times*. We'll be discussing the quagmire in the Middle East today, and we'll focus on what Israel, the Arab states, and the U.S. can do to get the peace process rolling. We have with us today Professor Edward Markowitz from Georgetown University, a noted expert on terrorism, and past fellow at the Oxford Center for Peace. And Georges Zaghlul, of the Committee for Peace and Justice in the Middle East. Welcome. Professor Markowitz, let's start with you. Just where do you see us in the process today? And how do you think the bombing here, the shootings and stabbings in Israel, the Muslim militants in Egypt, are going to impact whatever progress we have made so far?"

"Well, Bob, I'm an optimist," Ed says. "I see a move toward resolution and moderation on all sides. We've had the Israelis sitting down with their neighbors—"

"You're referring to the peace talks begun in the last administration," Bob says.

"Yes. And we have a climate in Israel where it's no longer sacrilegious to consider land for peace—"

"You mean the idea of Israel giving up land for peace," Bob glosses for the audience.

"That's right." Ed is starting to get annoyed by these interruptions.

"But what about the increase in terrorist activity? You're an expert on terrorism; does it concern you?"

"Well," Ed says, "terrorism is a complex phenomenon with many facets—"

"How about you, Georges Zaghlul?" Bob asks. "Do you see a distancing of the Islamic world from some of the tactics of these terrorists?"

"Certainly," Zaghlul replies. "Islam is a religion of peace and historically one of moderation and tolerance for minorities. But when we consider terrorism, we have to look beyond the headlines to the causes behind it. When young boys throwing stones are gunned down with automatic weapons the situation becomes inflammatory."

"We have a long line of callers," Bob says, "Let's go to Carol in San José. Hello, you're on *Talk of the Times*."

"Hi, Bob, I love your show," says Carol.

"Thank you," he says.

"This is a question for Professor Markowitz," Carol continues. "During the Gulf war there was a travel advisory that suggested that we not fly unless it was necessary. I've been hearing a lot about airport security, and I was wondering if they are still advising people not to fly."

Ed blinks. "Not that I know of," he says. "I don't really follow airport security."

"All right, thanks for calling, Carol," says Bob. "Let's go to Joyce in Silver Spring."

"Hi, this is a question for both guests," says Joyce. "When you're talking about the Islamic world, I wanted to know—have either of you seen the movie *Not Without My Daughter*? It was based on the autobiography of an American woman who is trying to get her daughter out of Iran?"

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"Yes, actually I have," Ed says.

"I just wanted to know—is it really like that for women in the Arab world?"

"Of course, Iranians are not Arabs," Ed says.

Joyce qualifies herself. "I guess I mean the Muslim world."

"Well, I can say this," Ed tells her, "I thought the movie accurately showed the lack of freedom for women. There were a few scenes, of course, that must have been fictionalized. The scene where the woman gets in touch with an underground escape movement at the bazaar—obviously the details there were changed to protect the actual people who helped her."

"Oh, no, that wasn't fictionalized," Joyce says. "That was in the book."

At which point Bob Kennedy booms out, "Hasan in Oklahoma City, you're on the air."

"Hello, this is Hasan. I am listening to the two guests and I want to know who they represent when they talk about moving to moderation. These men are both American people hired by Israel in a propaganda campaign—"

"Is this a question or a comment?" Bob Kennedy breaks in.

"First a comment, then a question."

"Well, all right, let's keep it brief."

Georges Zaghlul adds, "I am not American and I am not funded by Israel."

But Hasan continues, "You must understand the propaganda of land for peace. This is lipservice by the Israelis. This is a cover-up of Israel's abuses of human rights, its nuclear arsenal, and its terrorist destruction of lives and property."

"Let me explain something," Ed says. "There are a plurality of opinions in Israel, as in every democratic state, and there is a history in which policy has shifted and changed just as it does in every country. But to say that every move toward moderation is compromised—"

"In other words, give peace a chance," Bob sums up for him.

"No," Ed says, testily, "let me finish my point."

"You see," Hasan announces, "He is not interested in peace. He is interested in public opinion, and the reason for that is financial, because—"

"Listen, Hasan," Ed interrupts, "before we single out Israel, which is the only democracy in the Middle East, let's remember—"

Hasan talks over Ed's words, "Israel is a U.S. colony dedicated to a racist ideology. It is occupying land and holding indigenous peoples in concentration camps and building up weapons arsenals."

"Hold it," Ed says, "let's look at this in context. Let's consider what Israel is reacting to. Israel is surrounded by absolutist, radical, anti-Western theocracies. Look at the Iraqis. Look at the Per—Iranians. All this aside, we have to recognize and applaud the movement in Israel to recognize the plight of the Palestinians."

Hasan says, "This is only Israeli propaganda."

"Where do you get your information?" Ed asks Hasan.

"All right, we have to move on," Bob Kennedy says.

"Have you researched this issue?" Ed presses on, "or, let's hear what organization you belong to—"

Bob Kennedy is waving his hands at Ed and shaking his head.

"Let's hear the name of your organization," Ed says.

"All right," Kennedy says, "we have a lot to cover today."

"Just hold on a minute," Ed snaps, forgetting his professorial manner and his radio manners. "Let's hear who's paying you, Hasan."

"Georges Zaghlul," Kennedy interrupts, "what do you think of the issues Hasan raises. Are these legitimate concerns?"

"The concerns are very real," Zaghlul begins. As he speaks Kennedy passes Ed a note: "Do not antagonize callers please!"

Ed has a roaring headache by the time the two-hour show is over. He can barely see straight and almost hits a biker driving home. There is no point in going back to school. He gets a dusty bottle of Scotch from the cabinet over the refrigerator and pours himself a drink. They got him comfortable with their bright, intellectual-sounding producer—the one who could read—and then they just threw him out there and he couldn't hear himself think, let alone formulate his argument. And he had flattered himself that he would have a chance to make a real statement there on national radio, not just about tolerance and coexistence in the Middle East, but about the way we examine other cultures, about examining our assumptions and moving beyond stereotypes into a more enlightened, more cosmopolitan view of the world. His temper had flared up again, shot to hell the balance Bordles had so admired in his book. He couldn't help himself sitting there with that simplifying, bowdlerizing radio moderator, and those callers, by turns ignorant and vituperative. Of course, Georges Zaghlul had kept his cool; he is a lobbyist, a hired gun. But Ed made a perfect fool of himself. This is why, despite his dreams when he was young, he is an academic and not a diplomat. He has studied and written—"brilliantly," according to the *Near East Review*—on diplomatic theory, but he doesn't have the personality for diplomacy.

The next day Ed and Sarah stand in the social hall of Congregation Shaarei Tzedek. Ed is wearing a peach satin *yarmulke* with "Bat Mitzvah of Katie Passachoff" printed on the inside in gold. "Ed, I heard you on *Talk of the Times* yesterday," slim, snowy-

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haired Ida Brown tells him. They are all standing in the buffet line. "He was wonderful, wasn't he, Sidney?"

Sidney nods and says, "You took out that Arab from Oklahoma City. You really had his number. I said to Ida, 'I'm glad we had someone on there to defend Israel.'"

"Well, I didn't go on the show to defend Israel." Ed is feeling grumpy. "I was trying to talk about terrorism and its impact on the peace process."

"It all goes together hand in hand," Sidney Brown tells him.

The videographers are walking along the other side of the buffet tables, panning over the food. At the midpoint of the buffet table one of the chefs is carving up the prime rib.

The Greenbergs wave at them from the other end of the line, and Jeanne Greenberg seems to be calling out, "Loved you on *Talk of the Times*," while Art Greenberg gives Ed the thumbs-up sign.

Ed looks at Sarah. "You see," she says, "everyone loved it."

"Of course they did," Ed groans, "I gave them the Arab-baiting performance they were looking for."

"Relax. You made them happy!"

"Meanwhile, I'm a laughingstock at the department."

"Oh, stop. You're the man of the hour."

Several people come over and congratulate Ed at table eleven. A few of them are old-timers in their eighties, and they congratulate Sarah too, and tell her she must be very proud of her husband's accomplishments. She thanks them all.

A drum roll signals the arrival of the bat-mitzvah cake, which the caterer rolls in on a white table, for everyone to see. It is magnificent—adorned with a marzipan book and a gilt ribbon bookmark. The pages of the open book are inscribed to Katie. There are holders on the table for the birthday candles. Katie Passachoff comes to stand by the cake, to be photographed. She is thin and long-legged in her floral dress, and she wears large round glasses. With the video cameras running, she takes the microphone.

"Another speech?" Ed asks Sarah.

"No," Sarah whispers back, "I think she's going to do the candle-lighting thing."

Sure enough, the keyboardist from Phil's Harmonic begins playing softly, and Katie reads:

Friends and family, I have got.
I love you all an awful lot.
With joy I ask you each to take
A candle on my birthday cake.

Three friends I have,
So great and jolly,
Darcy, Britanny, and Molly.

Ed and Sarah watch as the three friends get up to light candles. "I can't believe this with the rhymes and the piano," Ed says. "Have we seen that before?"

"She's very poised," Sarah comments, watching Katie read.

"You say that at every bat mitzvah," Ed reminds her. Then, a few minutes later, "How many candles does she get? There are seventeen people up there already."

"A lot of them are sharing candles," Sarah explains.

A woman Ed doesn't know leans over from the next table and whispers, "You don't know me. I'm Katie's aunt. I just wanted to say I heard you on public radio. I only heard the end, but did they say you wrote a book?"

Just at that moment Katie Passachoff is reading:

Much loved, and too seldom seen,
Light a candle, Aunt Irene.

"I think you're on," Ed tells Katie's aunt.

"Oh, you're right. Thanks," she says.

When the cake is finally rolled off for cutting, the band starts playing again and Sarah wants to dance. "All right, come on, we have to check out the band for the wedding. Listen, what's that they're playing?" Sarah hums a bit, "'More'? I think they've hit our decade!"

They go out onto the dance floor, where a few couples are sham-dancing around the zest-filled Millers who have had dance lessons and take to the floor whenever they can. "Maybe we should take some lessons," Sarah says, looking over Ed's shoulder.

"Why?" Ed asks. "You know, I can't believe how many people were listening to me on the radio."

"That's what I've been telling you," Sarah says.

"But they'll never invite me back."

"So what? They want you in Iran. Do you think we should hire them?" She gestures with her head toward Phil's Harmonic.

"Yeah. They're good. I liked the guy who did keyboard for Katie's candle-lighting."

Sarah gives him a look.

"Oh, God, Fran and Stephen are working their way over here," Ed says. He steels himself for another battery of compliments on his performance.

"How are you, Sarah? Ed?" Fran asks them. "Isn't this lovely? Can you believe Katie is twelve years old already? I feel so old! I remember when she was born."

"You know," Stephen Miller says, "as the time passes you don't remember the years any more, just the decades."

"And now your oldest is getting married?" Fran shakes her frosted head at Sarah. Fran chatters away, and Ed looks around for some means of escape. It's clear to him that as far as the talk show went—she and Stephen hadn't even been listening.

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Physics vs. Metaphysics

Jeffrey Marsh

THE pursuit of scientific research over the past century, not least by physicists, has given us unprecedented knowledge of the universe on scales from the submicroscopic to the cosmic. That new knowledge reflects observations and experiments which can only be meaningfully interpreted via the two reigning theories of modern physics, relativity and quantum mechanics. In many of their central features, these arcane mathematical theories describe nature as behaving in ways that flagrantly defy the common sense every human being acquires through his own direct experience of the world. But common sense has been forced to yield before the power of the new science not only to demonstrate that such bizarre behavior goes on but to exploit it in the otherwise incomprehensible devices, from nuclear bombs to computer chips, that characterize the late 20th century.

The new physics would seem to have triumphed, then, in both theory and practice. In the post-World War II period, the promise of new levels of material benefit—and the exigencies of military competition—were enough to guarantee public support of pure scientific research. This involved the construction of ever more ambitious and expensive particle accelerators that could delve deeper and deeper into the core of the nucleus, and space probes able to venture farther and farther into the depths of the galaxy. In recent years, however, much of the power of those motivations has waned, and science has lost the hearts and minds of many non-scientists (if it ever really had them).

Today, therefore, big science is in big trouble. Proposed appropriations for the Superconducting Super Collider (SSC), the largest accelerator ever, already under construction in Texas, and also for the Space Station, the single large-scale project now left in NASA's once-bulging portfolio, have had to weather an annual perils-of-Pauline ordeal in Congress. Both now face possible extinction. Similar troubles have befallen the high-energy physicists on the frontiers of basic research who long constituted the elite of the scientific world. They have lost their prestige even in the eyes of many within the scientific community, including physicists in more mundane areas, who believe it is time to switch our priorities to other, less ambitious but potentially more practical areas of research.

Three recent books deal with this situation from different perspectives. While all three are directed to lay readers, two are essentially concerned with the current status of elementary-particle physics as a scientific pursuit. Of these, the one by Nobel laureate Steven Weinberg, *Dreams of a Final Theory*,* is a deeply-felt apologia for modern physics, in particular the brand concerned with plumbing the innermost secrets of nature. The other, *The End of Physics: The Myth of a Unified Theory*, is a less optimistic account of the same subject by David Lindley,† a research-scientist-turned-writer who is a generation younger than Weinberg.

The third book, *Understanding the Present: Science and the Soul of Modern Man*, is by Bryan Appleyard,** a columnist for the London *Sunday Times* and, by way of contrast, a thoroughgoing skeptic about the value of science as a major human pursuit. Appleyard welcomes the philosophical problems of contemporary physics with which Weinberg and Lindley grapple, and regards as long overdue the growing public disquiet over science.

STEVEN WEINBERG remains firmly anchored in the mainstream tradition of post-Newtonian thinkers convinced that science, based on direct observation of nature, has given mankind its only source of real truth. In *Dreams of a Final Theory*, Weinberg's main interest is to demonstrate that today's physics, although it has become increasingly abstract and remote from direct observation, is still within that mainstream.

Thus, Weinberg vigorously defends his case that physicists are "beginning to catch glimpses of the outlines" of the "final laws of nature." Driven by an intense awareness of the powerful opposition to building the SSC, Weinberg also argues that only a machine with the capabilities of the new accelerator can perform the experiments necessary to test current insights regarding the shape of this final theory.

Weinberg is a graceful writer; his 1977 book, *The First Three Minutes*, was widely hailed for its lucid and accessible account of the modern cosmological theory of creation. He won his Nobel Prize some 25 years ago for explaining that two quite distinct phenomena can be regarded as manifestations of one fundamental force of nature. That surprising unification involved the familiar force of electromagnetism and the previously mysterious, much weaker, force displayed in nuclear interactions involving electrons and the ghostly particles called neutrinos.

In his new book, Weinberg explains how the final theory he foresees will unite not only those two forces, but also the far stronger force that binds particles together within atomic nuclei and the far weaker gravitational force that is inconsequential on the atomic

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* Pantheon, 334 pp., $25.00.
† Basic Books, 275 pp., $25.00.
** Doubleday, 269 pp., $23.50.

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level but dominates the behavior of the universe at large. By uniting all these apparently disparate forces, this theory—sometimes immodestly termed the "theory of everything"—will fulfill an ambition long held by Albert Einstein.

Weinberg takes pains, however, to explain that the current approach is radically different from Einstein's hoped-for "unified-field theory." Einstein rejected passionately the idea that quantum mechanics, with its fundamental limitations on describing the universe in the clear, precise, and deterministic way demanded by classical physics, represented ultimate reality. Yet the new final theory will be a "quantum-field theory" that fully accepts just those limitations. Weinberg believes they have been demonstrated to be inescapable, both by the continuing success of quantum mechanics as used every day by practicing scientists and by experiments since Einstein's death which have tested some paradoxical predictions of quantum mechanics and showed that his usually infallible intuition was wrong.

The aspect of quantum mechanics that so exercised Einstein, symbolized in the popular imagination by Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, is its insistence that we will never be able to describe fully the behavior of nature on the smallest scale. The final theory sketched by Weinberg goes considerably further in limiting our direct knowledge of nature. He describes the multiplicity of already known subatomic particles, as well as others he hopes will be produced in the SSC, in terms of still smaller entities which we can never hope to detect directly and which are only the material manifestations of invisible fields that indicate a fundamental mathematical order to the universe.

That is a disturbing development for modern science, which since its birth a half-millennium ago, in the age of Copernicus and Galileo, has insisted on observing the phenomena its theories describe. The entities postulated by the new theory are—and will always remain—inaccessible to human observers. Indeed, the beautiful symmetry of the final theory so beloved by Weinberg, a symmetry which arises when the fundamental forces reveal their true nature as aspects of one unified structure, has not been evident in the universe, he admits, since about one ten-billionth of a second after the Big Bang, when the temperature of the universe was about a million billion degrees.

Reproducing those conditions is a feat impossible to achieve in any terrestrial laboratory; nor are they to be found anywhere in the universe today. But Weinberg, invoking explicitly Platonic terms, believes in the truth of the theory because of its mathematical beauty. He is confident it will become generally accepted because from it we will be able to calculate, at least in principle, the properties of particles which actually *can* be observed.

ACCORDING to David Lindley, however, we are still uncomfortably far from being able to perform those calculations. In *The End of Physics*, Lindley, who was trained in theoretical physics and astronomy and is now a senior editor of *Science* magazine, gives a broader and deeper picture than Weinberg of the historical development of modern physics. His account of the ongoing search for a final theory is more detailed, more accessible to the lay reader, and considerably less optimistic.

Lindley explains in relatively simple terms why particles which appear to be the same when they have high energies may behave in different ways at lower energies; this is the phenomenon of "symmetry breaking," which produces the different forces we observe. He also discusses how theorists hope to be able to include gravitation—a phenomenon that has long eluded quantum mechanics—in their "theory of everything" by making use of fashionable "superstring" concepts. And he shows in much more detail than Weinberg just how unobservable these concepts really are.

A superstring is an incredibly small construct, smaller than an atomic nucleus by about the same ratio as a nucleus to the earth—or as the earth to the whole visible universe. Originally perceived as 26-dimensional entities, superstrings were made more tractable when four physicists (subsequently dubbed the Princeton string quartet) managed to conceal 16 dimensions in the mathematical woodwork, leaving only 10. After six of these were somehow "rolled up" on an even smaller scale, just four remained, corresponding to the three dimensions of space and one of time which mere human beings are able to discern. This development was the culmination of a series of simpler string theories, including one called supergravity that was for a time favored by Stephen Hawking, the reigning genius of cosmology.

WHY should the search for a "theory of everything" be of interest not only to particle physicists trying to explain elementary particles but also to cosmologists? One reason is its relevance, as we have seen, to the behavior of the universe close to the Big Bang. But cosmologists also hope that the theory will help them solve a truly cosmic conundrum: according to calculations, the universe is expanding at a rate that implies it must contain ten times as much matter as astronomers have observed.

The currently favored solution to this riddle is that the universe is full of some mysterious and undetectable "dark matter," possibly consisting of a hitherto unknown type of particle whose existence might be explained by the final theory. Weinberg, for one, holds out the hope that these particles might be discovered as products of high-energy collisions in the SSC. If they are not, the ever-resourceful theorist has a fall-back position: instead of postulating dark matter, we can begin adjusting terms in our cosmological equations.

Lindley is not impressed by this approach. He sees it as the offspring of incestuous mutual speculation between physicists and cosmologists, each searching desperately for theoretical support in a world with little opportunity for actual observation or experiment. He concludes his account:

> This theory of everything will be, in precise terms, a myth . . . a story that offers explanations

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> for everything we can see around us, but can be neither tested nor disproved. . . . This myth will indeed spell the end of physics . . . because physics has reached the end of all the things it has the power to explain.

THIS conclusion would undoubtedly be seconded by Bryan Appleyard, who in fact describes science in general as "a form of mysticism that proves particularly fertile in setting itself problems which only it can solve . . . by the employment of [a] bizarre repertoire of thought processes." Appleyard's critique extends far beyond the content of the latest theories of particle physics to encompass the whole scientific enterprise, which, he argues, is responsible for many of the spiritual ills afflicting modern man.

In a densely-argued polemic that ranges from Aristotle to the theory of everything, Appleyard characterizes the scientific attitude, or mode of thought, as a constant search for an ever more precise description of nature, a description deliberately independent of human perspective. Because of science's indubitable success in achieving this aim, a success which has greatly magnified our power to manipulate the world about us, scientific inquiry has itself become increasingly accepted as the only legitimate mode of "objective" knowledge.

But that is not all. According to Appleyard, the deliberately limited and highly fragmented nature of the questions science sets itself, together with the avowedly tentative nature of the answers it gives, has served as a model for culture. This is epitomized in the overwhelming, and overwhelmingly corrosive, tolerance that is the hallmark of modern liberal societies. Acceptance of the scientific mode of thought has led to a general delegitimation of questions of ultimate value that are not subject to measurement, and has foreclosed the possibility of final answers. Even those who still believe in such answers, says Appleyard, have been "marginalized" by the ethos of science, and can no longer regard their own moral choices as absolute.

Yet this atmosphere of all-pervading skepticism has in turn led to a sense of crisis that is most obvious in our schools, beset as they are by a "chronic uncertainty about what there is to teach, about whether there is anything to teach." So Appleyard holds out a glimmer of hope. Disillusionment with science—or at least with its inability to deal with the spiritual side of man's nature—has led to a growing backlash. The very decadence of liberal society—"its obvious failure to transmit any value other than bland tolerance"—may make change inevitable.

There are signs of such change, but so far they have been specious ones. Take the environmentalist movement, which might be seen as indicative of a search for new sources of meaning in life. As Appleyard notes, however, environmentalism, despite its proclaimed hostility to the destructive aspects of science, has not only embraced the mistaken idea (inspired by science) that humanity is simply part of nature, but perverted it further to make mankind a villain.

Another misguided response to scientific imperialism is the intense cultivation of the self, both physical—in the form of compulsive exercising and food faddism—and psychological, with countless approaches to self-improvement being peddled by hosts of professional therapists, hucksters, and cultists and eagerly accepted by multitudes. Here, too, Appleyard points out, the nostrums are routinely justified in scientific—or at least pseudo-scientific—terms.

Paradoxically, Appleyard believes that some of the impetus for a move away from the prevailing scientific outlook may come from developments in science itself, like those of quantum mechanics which make untenable the classical scientific idea of a disembodied observer separated from the universe but able to describe it objectively. Other such developments are various "anthropic principles" formulated by puzzled physicists to explain the role of intelligent beings in the universe.

The least ambitious of these theories—the Weak Anthropic Principle—says merely that the universe must have properties that are consistent with the existence of life (if it did not, we would not be here). But various stronger versions have also been proposed, of which the most far-reaching, the so-called Final Anthropic Principle, asserts that intelligence must come into existence and will never die out. Although the Weak Anthropic Principle raises little objection anywhere, except for its possibly tautologous nature, the stronger ones are controversial, especially to Weinberg and the other hard-nosed scientists who share his view that "our species has had to learn in growing up that we are not playing a starring role in any sort of grand cosmic drama."

As Appleyard points out, however, even if some schools of scientific thought seem to be moving in the direction of recognizing a cosmic meaning to human existence, theirs is still a distinctly minority view. And anyway it is vain to look to science to supply answers about the human role in the universe, because the very nature of science is to be skeptical of its own theories. The only truly fixed principle of science is its willingness to regard every hypothesis as tentative, no idea as sacred—except the idea of the continual progress of science itself toward the ultimate understanding of reality. It is *that* sacred idea, of never-ending progress, to which Appleyard hopes to lay siege.

IN ITS own way, each of these three books offers a response to the perception that the journey of physics as we have known it since Newton is coming to an end. Weinberg believes that the end will be triumphal; his confident expectation of a beautiful mathematical description of the unity of the fundamental physical forces shaping the universe far outweighs any consideration that his longed-for description can never be confirmed directly by observation. Lindley sees in this Platonic approach not an ultimate triumph but rather a frustrating and seemingly inescapable retreat from physics to metaphysics. And to Appleyard, this retreat, the *reductio ad absurdum* of a methodological madness that foolishly expects meaningful an-

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swers to emerge from trivial questions, may represent the beginning of a long overdue admission that science does not represent the only means to the discovery of ultimate truth.

Ironically, of the three authors, Weinberg is the one whose approach seems closest to that of his avowed nemesis, the religious believer. Such a believer, with his faith in a humanly meaningful universe, Weinberg sarcastically likens at one point to "someone who has convinced himself that he is bound to win a lottery because he desperately needs the money." Yet from another perspective Weinberg's embrace of Platonism seems itself the result of a no less desperate need, this time for a final theory. And as for that theory itself? Weinberg, who adamantly refuses to accept the idea that evil in the world (as symbolized for him by the Holocaust) may be part of a larger design, remains in thrall to the idea of a design that was manifest for the merest cosmic blink, at the very beginning of time. Why not, then, a design that will reveal itself at the End of Days?

A European Wave of the Past

Angelo M. Codevilla

DURING the 1950's, Christian Democratic parties, bastions of anti-Communism and of the modern welfare state in its moderate or conservative form, held power in all the major countries of the European Community. During the 1960's, they seemed to be the wave of the future in Latin America. Today, even though interest in Christian Democracy is high in the former Communist world, the failure of the movement has become undeniable.

In June 1993, Italy's Christian Democratic party (DC), the most successful of its kind, having ruled the country uninterruptedly for 48 years, got all of 9 percent of the vote in Milan's mayoral election. (The winners were a hitherto powerless bunch of political nobodies calling themselves the Northern League.) The DC's historic leaders are under indictment for corruption. In July the party held a special "constituent" congress to change its name—thus aping the Italian Communist party, which executed the same maneuver in 1990 to distance itself from *its* unsavory past. Despite the DC's power, patronage, wealth, and sophistication, despite vast influence in the media, not to mention the support (albeit weakening) of the Church, Italian Christian Democracy is being repudiated as repugnant and anachronistic.

The Italian DC's predicament is not essentially different from that of other European and Latin American Christian Democratic parties. Even the German Christian Democratic Union—still in power in Bonn—and the Chilean DC—about to gain the presidency as part of an uneasy coalition with socialists—suffer, though not so acutely, from the same liabilities.

The fall of Christian Democracy is, as it happens, long overdue. So long as Communism was a threat, Christian Democrats could claim that they were its most trustworthy opponents. Now, however, they have no firm self-definition. They are neither principled defenders of free economies nor principled socialists, neither the champions of the family nor the party of New Age social bureaucracies. Least of all are they defenders of Christianity, though they certainly treat Catholic (and sometimes Protestant) prelates as prized interest-group constituents. They are, however, as much for high taxes, patronage, and statism in general as anyone on the political scene—and, not least, they have earned a reputation for corruption. Hence, they are liable to be swept away either by middle-class protest movements or by the first political situation that requires an unambiguous choice among important matters.

THE Christian Democratic movement in modern politics traces its ancestry to the 19th century. It consisted then of parties of Catholics who, in line with papal teachings, were on the whole quite wary of state power. Thus, the German Catholics who stood up to Bismarck were not asking that the government *do* anything, only that it stop its *Kulturkampf* aimed at driving Catholicism out of public life. The Frenchmen who fought Jules Ferry's establishment of a secular monopoly in tax-supported schools were saying the same thing. The Italian Romolo Murri, like his French counterparts, was careful to specify that his suggestions for improving the lot of workers were aimed at the private sector, not the state. Even in 1938, the founder of modern Italian Christian Democracy, Luigi Sturzo, stressed the vital importance of maintaining the independence of civil society, especially of education and economic enterprise.

All this was very much according to the social teachings of the Catholic Church. Today's impression that these teachings mandate a fuzzy sort of paternalism of the state over civil society (an impres-

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sion to which Christian Democrats have contributed mightily) has no basis in papal encyclicals. The popes always made clear that the state should be the servant rather than the master of families and civil society, and that state power is likelier than not to be misused. After all, if individuals are flawed by original sin, the state is even more so.

How, then, did Catholic parties become vehicles for supporting ever bigger government? Practically, the process was driven by the way Catholic politicians of different secular political persuasions came to terms with the greatest political movement of our time: the belief that the modern state could be the prime mover of material and social progress. Recall how widespread was the faith, early in this century, that the combination of technology and rational, large-scale industrial management was the key to health, wealth, and happiness. This was the model that infected a whole generation of political thinkers, including Catholics. And the fact that the "progressive" enterprise gave power to those who ran it only increased the attraction.

There was something else as well. To Catholic politicians, socialism—aside from being their spiritual enemy—offered the example of an organization which could fill the lives of its members and bind them together with ties that seemed stronger than the Church's. Many Catholic politicians admired and envied their socialist counterparts, not only for their role as material providers but for the power they wielded as heads of political battalions.

By the same token, many Catholic politicians were also deeply affected by another nemesis of Christianity, fascism. The Mussolini regime in Italy really did organize civil society. The fascists arranged outings for young people in the summer, help for farmers, recreation for industrial workers; they also undertook the first massive efforts to uplift downtrodden sectors of society. They bailed out failing businesses; established services for the unemployed; started minimum pensions for the aged. Not incidentally, they did all this with appointees and cooptees who were kept loyal by the patronage that all these activities generated. Just imagine, a Catholic politician might reason, how much good these tools could do in the hands of worthy and pious *anti*-fascists!

The latter got their chance after World War II when victorious American and British officials chose Christian Democrats and socialists to be the main contenders for power in Western Europe. Between the two, West European citizens by and large voted Christian Democratic. They did so not only to reject Communism, but above all to reaffirm the decent civilization that Christianity had built and that modern totalitarianism had well-nigh wrecked. The postwar period also saw a religious revival. The Christian Democrats all but asked for votes in the twin names of Jesus Christ and the United States of America, and they got them.

To be sure, not all Christian Democrats were enthused by the modern enterprise. The first set of postwar leaders—Italy's Alcide de Gasperi, France's Robert Schumann, and Germany's Konrad Adenauer—were in fact rather suspicious of it. They carried in their bones the old distinction between the party and the state, and between the state and the economy. But even in the 1940's these leaders did not represent the majority of their organizations. Schumann never really set policy for the French Popular Republican Movement (MRP). Until 1954, de Gasperi ran the Italian DC as the heir of Luigi Sturzo, and as the favorite of the Pope and the Americans, but he constantly compromised with internal leftist factions. And as for Adenauer, he emerged as the leader of the German CDU by daring acts of presumption and tactical skill, but despite his enormous success in raising a starving pariah-people to prosperity and prestige within the international community, his party could hardly wait to get rid of him and repudiate his policies.

So, by the 1960's, power within the European Christian Democratic parties had passed into the hands of two factions: pragmatic (read unprincipled) managers of patronage and far smaller groups of principled statists.

In Italy and France first, in Germany and the Low Countries later and to a lesser extent, the Christian Democrats built party structures that looked very much like those of the Communists—general secretaries, directorates, central committees, regional and provincial federations. Under the European electoral system of proportional representation (in Germany mixed with American-style direct elections), according to which a candidate's place on the party list determines his chances of election, and the party leadership determines each candidate's place on the list, the party could hire and fire legislators. Christian Democrats never went as far as the Communists, who required that MP's turn over their state paychecks in exchange for party salaries, but Christian Democratic MP's did work not so much for the voters as for the party or for one of its "mass organizations": labor unions or womens', youth, and church organizations.

As the years passed, more and more of the party apparatus was lodged and fed in the expanding state bureaucracy and nationalized industry. The Italian DC had a head start: it simply took over the giant fascist holding companies and expanded what it called the para-state sector. By 1978, one-third of all clerical workers in the country were government employees, not including the para-state sector. The German CDU had to start from scratch; nevertheless, by 1973 one out of five German service workers was a government employee. By the 1980's the influence of these parties extended throughout society, and good connections with them had become the shortest route to affluence.

One reason the parties chose to build big, clientelistic organizations was to reduce their dependence on the Catholic Church and *its* organizations. Immediately after the war, the clergy and lay volunteers were, by default, the most numerous and best-organized corps of political activists in Europe. Moreover, the Church's prestige was high. But the Christian Demo-

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crats, with the Italian contingent again in the lead, preferred to rely on members tied to the party by interest rather than by ideas.

Their treatment of the Church over the decades has been consistent with this. They have supported the material interests of the Catholic hierarchy (and in Germany of the Protestant hierarchy, too) as steadfastly as they have supported the interests of farmers. In Italy and Germany, tax monies pay the clerics' salaries, and, what is more, prelates can always get important government officials on the phone. But on issues like divorce, abortion, or education, European Christian Democrats have fought perfunctory battles, and catered more to the views of their secular coalition partners than to those of the Church. The Church, it seems, has acquiesced in an increasingly bad bargain for essentially mercenary reasons.

THE fall of the Christian Democratic parties is as instructive as their rise. As the biggest "objectively" conservative movement in Europe, Christian Democracy had gradually absorbed nearly all other conservative forces—monarchists in Italy and France, nationalists and refugee groups in Germany. Yet although most Christian Democratic politicians were happy enough to present themselves as conservative society's bulwark against the Left (the Italians used the term "anti-Communist dike," and until the mid-1970's the Germans made anti-Communist rhetoric into a high art), they became less and less distinguishable from the socialists, with whom they would coalesce or strike legislative deals without blinking an eye.

Thus, although the Christian Democrats' natural electoral constituency has remained conservative, when either the electoral system or the political situation has forced a choice, Christian Democrats have lost out because they have not been ready to represent the views of that constituency.

The first big casualty was France's MRP. Although the burial was delayed until 1969, the party effectively died in 1958 when Charles de Gaulle posed a clear choice between himself and the united forces of the Left. All manner of conservatives, Catholics included, saw him as a far less ambiguous champion than the MRP. Then, when the Fifth Republic scrapped proportional representation for majority voting by district, and the public got used to making choices among the most convincing leftists and the most convincing conservatives, the MRP was shut out.

Similarly with the most successful Christian Democratic parties, Italy's and Germany's. These had established a monopoly on representing the conservative electorate, and firmly believed that their voters had no choice but to stick with them no matter what. But as the parties became indistinguishable from the socialists—except in rhetoric—voters became less averse to experimenting and more attracted to anti-system candidates. In Italy, the conservative electorate that went to the Northern League last June could have gone to any likely-sounding movement that came along. But it was bound to leave the DC.

The German CDU, which triumphed in the 1990 election when it was (rightly) perceived as favoring rapid absorption of the former Soviet-occupied zone, has been trounced in every subsequent by-election. The immediate reasons are that it broke its pledge not to raise taxes to pay for reunification, that the tax monies spent on reunification seem to be doing more harm than good, and that the economy seems to be depressed, except for those who can get government contracts to rebuild the East. But the deeper reason for the decline in the CDU's electoral fortunes is that Germans, like other Europeans, have had enough of big government and are looking for ways of protesting. As in Italy, this is bad news for the Christian Democrats. If the CDU should be challenged by a middle-class, anti-state protest movement, whether of national scope or regionally based, little would stand in the way of its ending up like the Italian DC.

Ironically, the CDU's sister party, the Bavarian Christian Social Union (CSU), might become part of its undoing. The CSU, the direct descendant of the Bavarian People's party, has retained its regional organization and identity, and, despite its participation in the central government, has managed to present itself as the Bavarian people's advocate against the center. Thus it is reasonably well placed to take advantage of the Europe-wide reassertion of regional prerogatives, and of the growing feeling in Germany that subsidizing the East is a bad idea. None of this, of course, has anything to do with Christianity, except that Catholicism is a badge of Bavarian distinctiveness.

THE troubles of the big Christian Democratic parties can be summed up as follows: they are completely identified with the state and its clients, yet they are dependent on conservative voters who have less respect for the state with every passing day. This is also the predicament of the U.S. Republican party, and of the French Gaullists. It is not a passing problem. The current economic slowdown throughout the Western world is due to the excessive weight of the state—taxes and regulations. Conservative voters, always on guard against becoming the state's cash cows, always hostile to collectivist policies, have seen socialism collapse in the East and are less willing than ever to tolerate it at home, under whatever name. All conservative parties in the West are liable to sudden flights of voters to anti-state groups of widely varying quality.

But the failure of Europe's Christian Democratic parties has an additional dimension: they abused, and therefore devalued, the cross, the most powerful symbol in the Western world. Hypocrisy is corrosive. In time, other parties will occupy the Christian Democrats' political space, and for better or worse, both conservatives and professing Christians will continue to play a role in the modern world commensurate with their numbers, abilities, and dedication. Contemporary challenges to the Christian vision of society are at least as demanding as Bismarck's *Kulturkampf*. But no one will respond to them by trying to revive Christian Democracy.

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The Deniers

DENYING THE HOLOCAUST: THE GROWING ASSAULT ON TRUTH AND MEMORY. By DEBORAH LIPSTADT. *Free Press. 278 pp. $22.95.*

Reviewed by EDWARD ALEXANDER

Denying the Holocaust provides a detailed and incisive account of the antecedents, origins, and development of the crudest but also the most highly publicized form of travesty to which the Holocaust has been made subject in our day—the movement to deny that the destruction of European Jewry ever took place at all.

As Deborah Lipstadt tells the story, the first steps of outright denial were taken after World War II in France by Maurice Bardèche and Paul Rassinier, and in America by a variety of Nazi sympathizers. It is to Austin J. App, a professor of English at the University of Scranton and La Salle College, that Lipstadt assigns the dubious credit for enumerating the eight assertions that would form the credo of all subsequent deniers. These "principles" keep turning up recycled and repackaged in the "thinking" of those who engage Lipstadt's attention in the central chapters of her book—Arthur Butz, Ernst Zundel, Robert Faurisson, Fred Leuchter, and David Irving. They are as follows:

- The Reich plan for the Jews was never annihilation, only emigration.
- The gas chambers never existed.
- Most Jews who disappeared were under Soviet, not German, control.
- Those Jews who did die in German hands deserved what they got because they were spies, saboteurs, and criminals.
- If the Nazis really had murdered six million Jews, then "world Jewry" would have demanded subsidies to conduct research on the subject and Israel would have opened its archives to historians.
- The Jews who exploit the six-million figure have never supplied a shred of evidence to prove it.
- "Talmudists" and "Bolsheviks" have so bullied the helpless Germans that the latter have paid billions in reparations without even demanding proof of the allegations against them.
- The fact that Jewish scholars themselves do not agree in their calculations of the exact number of victims constitutes irrefutable evidence that they lack scientific proof of the occurrence of the Holocaust.

Few things better illustrate the bizarre logic of the deniers than this last "principle," since it invites an obvious retort: if world Jewry is indeed all-powerful, why has it not required its hireling scholars to be in perfect agreement on their findings? For that matter, as Lipstadt observes in one of the rare impassioned moments she allows herself, the omnipotent Jews who have allegedly forced Washington to cooperate in the Holocaust "hoax" are the very same Jews

> who were unable to convince [Washington] during the prewar and war years to liberalize the immigration system, open its doors to the 900 Jews on the *St. Louis*, admit German Jewish refugee children, transport refugees on empty transport ships returning from Europe, or permit any more than 1,000 Jews to enter the United States during the war itself.

The iron law of the deniers—no evidence attesting to the Holocaust is admissible—gives rise to methods of "argument" whose grotesqueness has been well captured by the French writer Nadine Fresco:

> A document dating from the war is inadmissible because it dates from those years. The deposition of a Nazi at his trial is inadmissible because it is a deposition from a trial. This is applicable to all the Nazis who were tried. If, as is the case, not one of them denied the existence of gas chambers, it is not because the gas chambers existed . . . but because the witnesses believed that if they assisted the victors, the judges would reward them with clemency. As for the testimonies and depositions of some hundreds of Jews who pretended to be survivors of the genocide, they are inadmissible because given by people who could only be instigators or, at best, accomplices in the rumor that led to the swindle from which they benefited.

Lipstadt adopts a similar tone of exasperation in describing the quaint logic of Northwestern University's Arthur Butz (a professor of electrical engineering). Butz alleges that "the myth of the six million" (the title of his book) is based upon the mass forgery, after the war, of thousands of documents designed to prove that the Nazis intended to murder the Jews, whose diabolical cleverness included an ability to convince "the very people they accused of perpetrating the hoax that it had actually happened," thus "winning the defendants' [i.e., the Germans'] cooperation in their own incrimination."

FAR from being elusive, amorphous, or ill-defined, the Holocaust is by now one of the most fully documented events in all history. It would, therefore, seem virtually impossible for any reputable historian to deny that it happened at all. And indeed, no reputable historian has done so. The deniers, a collection of anti-Semitic cranks, include veterans of fascist and Nazi organizations, convicted frauds and libelers, pornographers, and similar types. How, then, given the level of discourse at which they operate and the frequency with which they have been discredited in the courts, do they continue to flourish?

One reason is that the media are endlessly fascinated with them. In one particularly telling example, Lipstadt recounts the apparent indestructibility of Fred

EDWARD ALEXANDER's *latest book is* The Holocaust and the War of Ideas *(Transaction).*

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Leuchter, a self-proclaimed "engineer" and seller of (appropriately enough) electric chairs who also specializes in denying that Jews were murdered in gas chambers. After being unmasked as a charlatan and liar in the Ernst Zundel trial in Canada, and declared a fraud by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, he was depicted in an article in the *Atlantic Monthly* (February 1990) as an expert on this country's execution equipment. Deluged by protests, the magazine pleaded ignorance of Leuchter's sordid past and declared that its researchers could hardly be expected to know about his peculiar "hobby."

Three months later, the ABC program *Prime Time Live* devoted a segment to this same "Dr. Death," despite being informed in advance of his record of fraud and Nazism and despite being warned (by Lipstadt and others) that airing the segment would enhance the reputation of this discredited man and of Holocaust denial in general. The profile of Leuchter not only was aired, it studiously eliminated all reference to his activity as a Holocaust denier.

Lipstadt returns frequently to the eagerness with which journalists and especially TV and radio talk-show hosts give air time to the deniers. The compulsive desire to stage "debates" between them and genuine historians or survivors arises, she believes, not only from a show-business spirit but from "an absolutist commitment to the liberal idea of dialogue." It is this that links the professional communicators to their brethren at the universities—whether students, professors, or administrators. These, in turn, inappropriately invoke the First Amendment to protect the allegedly inalienable right of Holocaust deniers to run their paid ads or receive free op-ed space in campus newspapers. (As Lipstadt acidly notes, this devotion to "free speech" flags considerably when editors of college papers are offered ads for cigarettes, and disappears altogether when it comes to giving space to opinions that have been deemed politically incorrect. One may also venture to guess that a movement claiming that black slavery never existed in this country would encounter some difficulty in placing *its* ads or expressing its "opinions.")

THE reluctance of many in the academic community to reject anything as untruth, or even to acknowledge that truth exists and can be known, is probably a sufficient explanation of the ability of the Holocaust deniers to make their way into universities. The manifold imbecilities displayed by the universities in dealing with this problem are discussed, at perhaps excessive length, in the book's penultimate chapter. But Lipstadt also proposes a single source for the free-speech argument that is routinely trundled out on college campuses in defending the "rights" of deniers. That source is the well-known linguistics scholar Noam Chomsky.

In 1980, Chomsky, whose previous contribution to the discussion of Nazism had been an urgent insistence that "what is needed [in the U.S.] is a kind of denazification," discovered Robert Faurisson, a French right-wing anti-Semite and sometime lecturer in literature at the University of Lyons-2. Faurisson's guiding dogma was that "Hitler never ordered (or permitted) that someone be killed because of race or religion." If the Nazis built gas chambers, it was for gassing lice. (After all, had not Himmler himself said that "it is the same with anti-Semitism as with delousing"?) Moreover, the only witnesses to the Holocaust were Jews, and Jewish witnesses were liars—because they were Jews.

Chomsky came noisily to the defense of Faurisson after the latter's university classes had been suspended* and he had been brought into court for defamations of witnesses and scholars of the Holocaust. Chomsky placed his own name at the head of a petition supporting Faurisson's "just right of academic freedom" and identifying him as someone who had been "conducting extensive historical research into the 'Holocaust' ques-

* Faurisson's right to teach was *not* withdrawn, and his request of a transfer to teach correspondence courses was approved.

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tion" and was harassed as soon as "he began making his *findings* [emphasis added] public."

As the French scholar Pierre Vidal-Naquet has remarked in *Assassins of Memory* (Columbia University Press, 1992), a useful complement to Lipstadt's book,*

> what is scandalous about the petition is that it never raises the question of whether what Faurisson is saying is true or false, that it even presents his conclusions or "findings" as the result of a historical investigation, one, that is, in quest of the truth.

Although Lipstadt assigns considerable blame to Chomsky for his "Voltairean" defense of the Nazis' right to free speech, she does not follow him down the winding path whereby he has moved deeper and deeper into the revisionist morass, arguing, first, that denial of the Holocaust is no evidence of anti-Semitism, and second, in a truly spectacular example of *tu quoque*, that anyone who says the Jews alone were singled out by Hitler for total annihilation is involved in "pro-Nazi apologetics."

At times Chomsky has given the impression that what moves him to defend the deniers is simply an immaculate agnosticism. Thus, in *Libération* (December 23, 1980) he wrote that "I do not know enough about [Faurisson's] work to determine if what he is claiming is accurate or not." And in *Le Matin* (January 19, 1981) he wrote that "we do not want people to have religious or dogmatic beliefs about the existence of the Holocaust." But even though Chomsky does not directly endorse the claims of Faurisson and the other cranks, he wishes them well in their endeavors; for he evidently thinks that to undermine belief in the Holocaust is to undermine belief in the legitimacy of the state of Israel, which many people suppose (albeit mistakenly) to have come into existence because of Western bad conscience over what was done to the Jews in World War II.

Indeed, the crucial place of Israel in the demonology of the deniers is the most relentlessly pursued theme of Lipstadt's book. Almost without exception, they claim that the Jews invented the "legend" of the Holocaust because they wanted license from the world to "displace" the poor Palestinians and establish the Jewish state, and they wanted the helpless, defeated Germans to finance the operation. In her scrupulous and patient manner, Lipstadt points out that although the deniers constantly accuse Israel of exaggerating the number of Jews killed so that it could get more German money, in fact, since the money Israel did receive was based on the cost of resettling *survivors*, it would have been in the state's interest to claim that fewer than six million had been killed and that more had managed to reach Israel. But such, again, are the grotesqueries of denial logic. (Although it may be impolite to say so these days, articles denying the Holocaust have long been a staple of publications of the PLO.)

Denying the Holocaust is a book that was undertaken with great reluctance, for its author was keenly aware that for the deniers there is no such thing as unfavorable publicity. (One of them said of his conviction by a Canadian court for promoting racial hatred that "it cost me $40,000 . . . but I got a million dollars' worth of publicity for my cause.") She began, she writes, as "an ardent advocate of ignoring them," but after examining their activities closely, decided that they would not and will not retreat unless aggressively beaten back.

Without according them legitimacy by "debating" them, either on the TV talk shows that have incessantly invited her to do so or in this book itself, Lipstadt has, in her scholarly and dispassionate exposé of their political program, fake scholarship, and fraudulent methods, exploded every one of the deniers' claims. Whether her tenacious effort will explode the movement itself remains to be seen. "The wicked," says Isaiah, "are like the troubled sea;/ For it cannot rest,/ And its waters cast up mire and dirt."

* Also worth consulting are *Holocaust Denial* by Kenneth Stern (American Jewish Committee, 1993) and *David Irving's Hitler* by Eberhard Jackel (Ben-Simon Publications, 1993).

Metropolitan Diary

NEW YORK DAYS. By WILLIE MORRIS. *Little, Brown. 396 pp. $24.95.*

Reviewed by
RICHARD BROOKHISER

In 1963, Willie Morris, of Yazoo City, Mississippi, came to New York to join the staff of *Harper's* magazine. Four years later he became, at age thirty-two, its editor-in-chief. Four years after that, he quit after a collision with the owners. *New York Days* records his passage through the city, the 60's, and the world of journalism when it was in a period of ferment.

Though Morris assures us that there were moments when his rise in the world struck him as unreal, it was not incredible. Morris's lift-off had been boosted by a Rhodes scholarship and a stint at the *Texas Observer*, one of those regional publications New York journalists admire because they so resemble their own. Still, the likelihood that a young man like Morris would get to the metropolis one way or another did not lessen his enthusiasm once he arrived.

> I grew familiar with the palatial townhouses and high-rise penthouses on the Upper East Side with marble staircases, wide and steep and long, and Steinway grands which Gershwin had played on right in these rooms, and Cole Porter of Peru, Indiana, and Johnny Mercer of Savannah, Georgia, and I talked with the people who had known them all. . . . One could in these moments stand on the outside balconies and absorb the music from the distance and tinkle the ice in your glass and watch the great lights of Manhattan come on. . . . Who indeed *was* I then in those bright optimistic days, those high, windy, incandescent days. . . ?

As these sentences indicate, the incandescent days are not the only windy things in Morris's book. But he does manage to capture the thrill of being at what feels like the center of the world.

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New York Days is less effective when it tries to capture the spirit of the 60's. Morris's account of the times is bland and summary, like riffling through the minutes of old editorial story conferences, not least because the stories which those conferences produced have fixed the period so vividly, and so rigidly, in our minds. Blacks, draft calls, crime, sex, riots, assassinations: we could write it ourselves, even those of us who were not there. The only thing missing is Woodstock.

Morris's most interesting take on the 60's derives from his awareness of the role that white Southerners played in articulating its discontents. Usually when white Southerners appear in discussions of the 60's, it is as counterrevolutionaries or sticks-in-the-mud: supporters of George Wallace, who were collared by Richard Nixon and his "Southern strategy," ultimately to be enlisted in the Reagan coalition. But the amorphous armies of the counterculture had white Southerners in their ranks, too. Morris discusses two fellow Mississippians, Tennessee Williams and Elvis Presley, as proto-rebels; when he moved North, he found New York filled with frisky writers and journalists from Dixie. Thirty years earlier, the Southern Agrarians had attacked the national consensus from the romantic Right. Morris's generation of Southern writers assailed it from the hip Left. "Perhaps my impoverished, whipped-down" homeland, writes Morris, "was at last wreaking its revenge."

THE national establishment on which the counterculture wrought its revenge included institutions like *Harper's*. When Morris rose to the top, the magazine was 117 years old. Its filing cabinets held cards on contributors such as "Clemens, Samuel" and "Roosevelt, Theodore." The favorite novelist of John Fischer, the previous editor-in-chief, was James Gould Cozzens. Morris's goal for the magazine was to bring together "the artistic sensibility [and] the trustworthy eye for detail" with "passionate and important" moments—a credo in line with the new style of journalism that had been developed by *Esquire* and *New York* and columnists like Murray Kempton.

The New Journalism encouraged two trends, not necessarily related, though they seemed so at the time. It gave writers leeway to present their stories with all the artistic and psychological resources at their command, and it allowed the presenters themselves to appear on stage, sometimes at center stage. The danger, often courted, was that the second tendency would undermine the first, rather than assist it.

Morris sought pieces from his Southern soul-mates; from friends and colleagues of the Wasp editor and dilettante George Plimpton; and from the New York intellectuals, whom Kempton had dubbed a Jewish "family" and at whose parties Morris often found himself "the solitary goy, or one of two if one counted Dwight Macdonald." Not everything he published, or wanted to publish, fit the New Journalistic formula. His greatest regret as an editor is that he ignored a feeler from Richard Nixon, who wanted to present his thoughts on Chinese-American relations in 1967. The article appeared in *Foreign Affairs* instead, and Morris freely acknowledges that his own prejudices let it get away.

The big one that did not get away, and an epitome of the style, was a 90,000-word rumination from Norman Mailer on his role in an anti-war demonstration at the Pentagon. "I wonder what he writes like when he's sober?" the magazine's copy editor demanded as she read the piece. Morris had a higher tolerance for Mailer's pretensions, and he was able to coax more articles out of him, including two on the 1968 conventions.

THE editorial idyll ended in 1971 when, as Morris tells it, he was summoned to Minneapolis for a dressing-down by John Cowles, Jr., the owner of *Harper's*. Cowles and the executives on the business end of the magazine were unhappy with its editorial direction and its bal-

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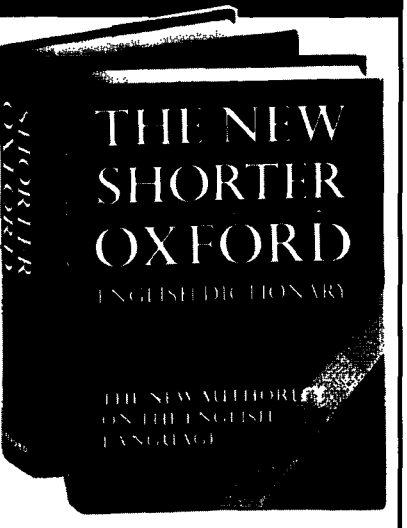

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ance sheet. "A magazine can't live on favorable press notices and dinner-party conversation," Cowles is quoted as saying. No one on the editorial side had the wit to reply that a magazine cannot live without them. When Cowles asked for changes in the way things were run, Morris resigned.

The melodrama with Cowles is the flimsiest part of *New York Days*. In a book that is remarkably free of bitchiness or unflattering memories, Cowles is the only villain, and he is not even a serious one, merely a generic cartoon Babbitt. Morris says that ideology played a role in his ouster, but that is hard to credit. By the end of the 60's, the politics of *Look*, the Cowleses' cut-rate version of *Life*, was indistinguishable from that of *Harper's*, though the writing was less gaudy. Either something went on that Morris is not telling us, or *New York Days* indeed presents all he knew of the mindset of the man who owned his magazine, in which case the parting of their ways was only a matter of time.

WHAT did Morris accomplish in the four years he did not have to think about John Cowles? Less than he had hoped, though more than nothing. A good measure of Morris's achievements as an editor, and of the New Journalism's achievements as a style, is *Miami and the Siege of Chicago*, the book that resulted from Norman Mailer's pieces on the 1968 conventions. (Morris devotes an entire chapter to his courtship of Mailer, and clearly considers him to have been the biggest head on his trophy-room wall.)

Miami and the Siege of Chicago is not such a good book: it is baggy, vain, foolish; lightened by humor, though not often enough. It is morally and intellectually dim: for all Mailer knows, the Vietcong were jungle nationalists, Ho Chi Minh a third-world de Gaulle.

And yet, because Mailer is capable of insights, and certainly capable of crafting them, there are sentences and paragraphs which were not only true in 1968, but which are still instructive 25 years later. Hubert Humphrey, he wrote, "would be the perfect President . . . for every speculator who liked a government contract to anchor his line while he got off that touchdown pass." Drain the bile in that sentence that clung to Humphrey because of Vietnam, and is there a better description of the way Democratic—or, indeed, democratic—politics works? And here is Mailer among the Republicans:

> In their immaculate cleanliness, in the somewhat antiseptic odors of their astringent toilet water and perfume, in the abnegation of their walks, in the heavy sturdy moves so many demonstrated of bodies in life's harness, there was the muted tragedy of the Wasp—they were not on earth to enjoy or even perhaps to love very much, they were here to serve, and serve they had in public functions and public charities . . . served on opera committees, and served in long hours of duty at the piano, served as the sentinel in concert halls and the pews on the aisle in church, at the desk in schools, had served for culture, served for finance, served for salvation, served for America—and so much of America did not wish them to serve any longer. . . .

There is the arc and explanation of George Bush's career: how he rose to the top (through hard work and doing what he was told), why he fell (through the inability to do anything else).

After he resigned, Morris moved first to Long Island, then ultimately back to Mississippi. He made a second marriage (his first broke up in the comings and goings of the 60's). Though he says he has not been able to read *Harper's* since he left it, he is clearly able to recollect his years there in something like tranquility.

New York Days is the kind of book that is almost guaranteed to be overpraised, since everybody of a certain age who reviews it is likely to have known the author, and to feel like giving him a boost, for *auld lang syne*. Despite its best efforts, it is not a flashy book. Neither, for that matter, was most of what the New Journalists wrote. But the flashes existed, and Morris takes pardonable pride in having helped generate some of them.

Biological & Other Parents

FAMILY BONDS: ADOPTION AND THE POLITICS OF PARENTING. By ELIZABETH BARTHOLET. *Houghton Mifflin. 276 pp. $21.95.*

Reviewed by SUSAN WIVIOTT

THIS past August, a screaming two-and-a-half-year-old child was taken from her home in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and sent to live with strangers in Iowa. The case, which received national media attention, involved a Michigan couple, the DeBoers, who had been fighting to keep the little girl they had raised since birth, and the girl's biological parents, the Schmidts, who had been trying to get her back since shortly after she was first given up for adoption. With neither side willing to bend, both couples had hired lawyers and fought their way through almost every state court in Michigan and Iowa.

To most people, the outcome, which took the child away from the only parents she had known and deposited her with complete strangers, must seem utterly sinister and baffling. Yet while the DeBoers have suffered grievously, their claim to sympathy is somewhat clouded by the fact that they knew within three weeks of bringing the child home that her biological parents wanted her back. They were also warned that, because the biological father, Dan Schmidt, had never relinquished his own parental rights, the law—in Iowa, at least—was stacked against them. Although it would have been difficult for them to return the child at any time, the baby would undoubtedly have been better off if she had been given over at an early stage and been spared what must now be the nightmare of her life.

Still, unusual though the DeBoer case may be in some of its twists and turns, it underlines the central issue that invariably crops up whenever adoptive or foster parents take over the care and up-

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bringing of a child: how to resolve the tension between any ongoing legal right of biological parents to reclaim their offspring and the deep bonds that inevitably develop between a child and those who raise him. *Family Bonds*, a new book by Elizabeth Bartholet, throws some much-needed light on this issue.

A professor at Harvard Law School, Bartholet comes to the subject of adoption from personal experience, which she recounts here. Around 1976, a divorced mother then in her thirties, she decided that she wanted another child. She pursued pregnancy through increasingly intrusive and painful fertility treatments until, in her early forties, she endured a number of unsuccessful attempts at in-vitro fertilization. Finally, at the age of forty-four, she realized that if she wanted another child, she would have to adopt one.

But that, too, proved problematic. Many adoption agencies disqualified her from their programs because of her age and single status. So, fortified only by her intense desire for a child, she ventured alone to South America, where in 1985, after overcoming stubborn bureaucratic rules and a dizzying array of absurd legal obstacles, she adopted the first of her two Peruvian-born sons. Christopher and Michael are now seven and four years old.

The rest of Bartholet's book, and by far the more important part, discusses the attitudes and policies governing adoption in this country—most of which, Bartholet contends, are highly misguided, totally untenable, and ultimately responsible for creating a large population of children in need of permanent homes and large numbers of adults who would love to adopt them, but no way of bringing the two groups together.

In Bartholet's judgment, American policy-makers and child-welfare agencies see adoption as a negative process that creates inferior and defective families, never as good or as happy as their biological counterparts. As a result of this attitude, she writes, we have created a web of laws, rules, and traditions designed to limit adoption or, when adoption does occur, to create adoptive families that resemble as closely as possible nuclear, biological families.

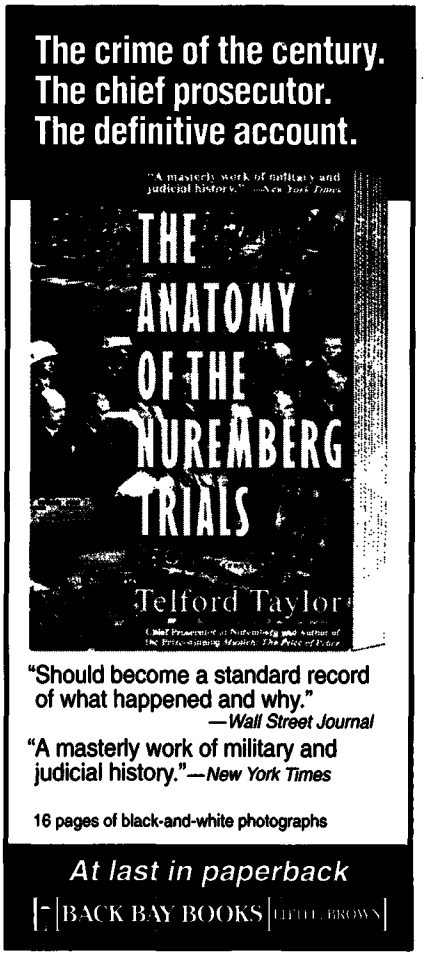
This sort of prejudice, however understandable it may be on its face, has created havoc—making it nearly impossible, for example, for white families to adopt black children. In one of her most interesting and compelling chapters, Bartholet argues that, contrary to the assertions of social-work organizations—including the National Association of Black Social Workers—there is virtually no empirical evidence to show that trans-racial adoptions have a harmful effect on children. By contrast, the delays many minority children face while waiting, often in vain, for racially compatible adoptive homes can cause permanent and devastating damage. Yet these policies continue to be enforced, ultimately creating a large class of minority children who end up essentially unadoptable.

The preference for the "natural" family model is insidious in other ways as well. Judging prospective adoptive parents by this model, adoption agencies, often backed by state laws, ask intrusive and irrelevant questions, and have created a process so lengthy, so expensive, and so pitted with obstacles that only the most determined are successful at negotiating it, while many people who can and want to provide a home for a child are systematically excluded.

RIGHT now, almost half-a-million children in this country are living in foster care. For many of them that system works as it is intended—as a temporary arrangement while parents (often only one parent) overcome a brief crisis. But there are vast numbers of foster children who will never be able to live with their natural parents and who urgently need homes. Because the system is unable or unwilling to free most of these children for adoption, foster care has become a permanent and destructive way of life for them. Children spend years being shuttled from one home to another, perhaps spending brief periods with a biological parent—usually the mother—only to be neglected or abused again. When they grow up and leave the foster-care system, they will be overrepresented among the ranks of the jailed and the homeless.

In New York, where I have had first-hand experience in city government, the foster-care caseload is approaching 50,000, and the system stands on the verge of collapse. The children are overwhelmingly minority, usually have little or no contact with their fathers, and enter the system as victims of abuse or neglect by their mothers or their mothers' boyfriends. Drugs are frequently involved. The system is so large and chaotic that very little attention is paid to planning for the long-term needs of these children or for ensuring the restoration of stability and permanence to their lives. Quite frequently one reads or hears of young children taken from the foster parents with whom they have spent their entire lives and sent to live with the biological mothers they barely know.

The horror of these cases points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up the total lack of regard that those who administer the law have for the relationship that develops between a child and those who act as his parents. Foster-care agencies and the city enjoy almost complete discretion when it comes to removing children from foster homes, and they use it indiscriminately. Foster parents, on the other hand, have no legal rights to the children they raise, and there is very little they can do to challenge these decisions, no matter how outrageous or how destructive to the child.

Nor is this callousness limited to instances of children being returned to their biological mothers. In countless cases in New York, and undoubtedly around the country, foster children are taken from loving and potentially permanent homes for almost any arbitrary reason at all. Children are moved to live with siblings or other relatives they have never met. They may be moved in order to break what the agency perceives as too close an attachment to their foster parents—a particularly perverse way of dealing with the system's own inability to make expeditious decisions. Children are moved to punish foster parents whom the agency views as nettlesome—those who ask too many questions, or try too hard to secure the benefits or services to which the children are entitled. And, of course, black children are moved from white families when it becomes apparent that the family is trying to make permanent what was meant to be a temporary situation.

In other words, children are moved for any reason, or for no reason at all. And in the process, there is severed the most important relationship that many of these children might ever have.

Elizabeth Bartholet is right when she says that an overly solicitous concern for the biological family has diminished our ability to do what is best for children. Her honest and on occasion brave book may not have all the answers, but it certainly asks the right questions: why have we made it so hard to adopt children, and why have we made things so hard on the children who desperately need to be adopted?

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James Joyce & Doris Day

FAME IN THE 20TH CENTURY. By CLIVE JAMES. *Random House. 256 pp. $27.00.*

Reviewed by TERRY TEACHOUT

IT IS inconceivable that the eight-hour BBC series, *Clive James's Fame in the 20th Century,* first broadcast in this country last June on PBS and repeated a number of times since, would have been aired by a commercial TV network. ABC, CBS, and NBC long ago shelved most traditional documentaries in favor of "newsmagazine" shows like *60 Minutes.* There are those who point to this fact as further proof of the total depravity of the commercial networks, just as there are those who believe everything they see on PBS, especially the documentaries that invariably win basketsful of awards yet attract only minuscule audiences more interested in PC than TV. Though *Fame in the 20th Century* is not quite like that, it is close enough to remind the viewer of how the world looks through the taxpayer-subsidized cameras of the Public Broadcasting System.

A greatly expanded version of the script of *Fame in the 20th Century* is now available in book form. Clive James, the author, is a journalist of a sort unknown in this country: an intellectual and writer (mainly of light verse, failed novels, TV reviews, and, from time to time, serious literary criticism) who moonlights as the host of popular BBC shows, among them *The Clive James Great American Beauty Pageant* and *Clive James Finally Meets Frank Sinatra.* The premise of his latest undertaking is that "20th-century fame" is an insidious American invention which is slowly strangling the rest of the world.

In his introduction, James advances the absurd claim that both book and script are actually an interpretation of "the big story of modern times—the long conflict between democracy and totalitarianism." In fact, they are hardly more than a collection of one-liners about "the 250 20th-century people who were genuinely, undeniably world-famous." One need say no more about this list than that it includes Michael Jackson but not Harry Truman. As for the one-liners, some are clever ("Doris Day was energetic and sexless, a deadly combination which left a man nothing to do except contemplate marriage—usually the one he already had"), some trite ("Billy Graham himself was more like a rock star than like Christ, who

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never rented a stadium or held a press conference"), a few breathtakingly vulgar ("Home movies shot at Hitler's hidey-hole in Bavaria suggested that Adolf and Eva were a great screwball comedy team in the making").

James's politics are by no means of the usual knee-jerk variety—he can be contemptuous of a socialist hero like George Bernard Shaw and respectful of a conservative like Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn—but they are nevertheless generally predictable. His main political stock in trade seems to be the familiar resentment of American power and influence that one has learned to expect from British journalists (though James is a transplanted Australian), and it is no fresher for having been smeared over the glossy pages of a coffee-table book.

BUT, of course, *Fame in the 20th Century* is nothing more than a companion volume to the TV series, in which James's one-liners take a distant back seat to the hundreds of tantalizingly rare film clips (of, among many others, George Gershwin, James Joyce, Rudyard Kipling, Isadora Duncan, Henry Ford, and Mahatma Gandhi) compiled by BBC archivists. Like all TV documentaries, *Clive James's Fame in the 20th Century* is ultimately about pictures, not words. This is nowhere more true than in the lengthy sequence about Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher.

On the soundtrack as in the book, James does his best to belittle these "two stars . . . , bathing in each other's glow." Reagan, says James, "was all fame and nothing else," while "no parody by others could match [Thatcher's] supremely confident self-parody of vim, decisiveness, and bustle." But the viewer *sees* only footage of two strong, self-assured leaders, an unintentionally vivid evocation of the not-so-distant time when they shared the helm of the free world.

Such is the nature—and power—of television. Cynics claim that TV is incapable of penetrating the mirrored surface of fame to show the hard substratum of character. Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher knew better. So did the English and American citizenries, who believed what they saw on TV (rather than what they were told they were seeing), and voted accordingly. And so, unexpectedly, does Clive James himself, whose last words about Reagan and Thatcher begin with a dubious proposition and end with an insight:

> Yet although neither Margaret Thatcher nor Ronald Reagan would ever have been elected if socialist ideology had not first collapsed, both of them had the essential political gift of attracting loyalty from people cleverer than they were. Finally leadership, in any democracy, is a matter of character—a fact few intellectuals find palatable.

And, one might add, even fewer TV hosts.

When Philadelphia Was the Capital of Jewish America

Edited by Murray Friedman

Between 1880 and 1920, some two million Jews entered the United States. Concerned that most would disappear into the melting pot, a group of religiously traditional and Jewishly knowledgeable Philadelphians joined with members of the German-Jewish community in New York and elsewhere to create a number of major institutions of American Jewish life, including the American Jewish Committee, the Conservative religious movement and the Jewish Theological Seminary, Gratz and Dropsie colleges, and the American Jewish Historical Society.

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Uncharted Waters

DEMOCRACY AGAINST ITSELF: THE FUTURE OF THE DEMOCRATIC IMPULSE. By JEAN-FRANÇOIS REVEL. Translated by ROGER KAPLAN. *Free Press. 288 pp. $24.95.*

Reviewed by PATRICK GLYNN

BY THE end of the cold war, conservatives had developed a strong body of theory on what might be seen as the two main issues of the struggle: deterrence and democracy. Jean-François Revel, the distinguished French writer, was an important contributor to both strands of reflection—notably with his compelling and widely touted 1984 book, *How Democracies Perish.*

With regard to deterrence, conservatives had always understood that the liberal penchant for conciliation was the wrong recipe for dealing with tyrants and aggressors. Over time, this instinctive insight about the threat and use of force came to be supported by a large body of theoretical and historical writing, including Revel's, criticizing the liberal vision of international conflict and in particular the liberal idol of arms control.

With regard to democracy, conservative intellectuals—again prominently including Revel—similarly elaborated a theoretical edifice to support what most conservatives were already inclined to accept: that democracy was an inherently peaceable form of government, the victim rather than the aggressor in the cold-war struggle, a decent and defensible type of political order, albeit with certain characteristic flaws and weaknesses.

Now that the cold war is gone, however, one can discern a certain intellectual complacency in the conservative camp, a strong tendency to rest on one's laurels and merely point to history as vindication of conservative dogma. This is unfortunate, because the new problems we face in the post-cold-war era clearly require fresh reflection, adaptation, and perhaps correction of basic insights.

Revel is to be congratulated for taking up this challenge in his new book, *Democracy Against Itself,* an important attempt to chart the unfamiliar political waters in which we now sail. The book, ably translated by Roger Kaplan, is both intermittently brilliant and generally disappointing—and perhaps in that sense not untypical of what we can expect from such efforts genuinely to confront the new.

Revel asks all the right questions, even if his answers are not always completely satisfying. He asks why Soviet Communism failed, and wonders why he and (especially) others did not clearly foresee its demise. He offers his own perfectly sensible, if not always entirely convincing, explanation for the conundrum that was Mikhail Gorbachev. He observes the extraordinary difficulties facing ex-Communist states in the transition away from Communism, and asks what they must do to return to normality. He wonders intelligently about the relation between democracy and markets (which must come first in development—capitalism or political freedom?). He examines the dilemma posed when democratic elections yield undemocratic results. And he asks whether Islam may not be inherently incompatible with democracy (Turkey is the great counter-example here), recognizing the special international threat posed today by Islamic fundamentalism.

SINCE Revel is above all a theorist, it is not surprising that his best chapter, the third, is also his most theoretical one. Here he offers his own concept of regimes or political orders, a cogent and very simple formula that provides a good antidote to the narrow democrato-centrism embraced by many American conservatives.

The distinction between democracy and totalitarianism, Revel argues, is less fundamental than the distinction between what might be called *normal* and *abnormal* governments. There are forms of government—notably certain kinds of monarchy and even empire (e.g., Rome)—which, though not democratic, are still normal, in the sense both of seeming legitimate to their citizens and protecting a range of civil liberties and rights. Such regimes permit, even nurture, the civil societies over which they hold sway. They govern, however imperfectly, by law.

Elections *per se,* Revel stresses, are not the crucial test. There can be democracies based on universal suffrage in which rights are less well protected than in traditional monarchies, and vice versa. "The president of Mexico," he writes, "though elected by universal suffrage (at least in theory), has powers that can directly infringe upon the life of an ordinary citizen in ways that no viceroy would have dreamed possible."

The distinguishing feature of *ab*normal states, by contrast, is their internal lawlessness, their wholesale violation of rights, and—in the extreme case of Communism—the destruction they visit on the civil society over which they so intrusively preside. According to Revel, the reason that Europe's ex-Communist states face a more difficult path to democracy and economic freedom than, say, Pinochet's Chile is precisely that both civil society and the economy were mutilated under Communist rule.

True, Revel points out, fascism and Nazism also wreaked violence through the abrogation of rights and especially through war-making, but the damage done by fascism to civil society in Germany or Italy was never so extreme: hence the relative ease of reconstruction and democratization after the regimes were displaced.

IF THERE is an overriding theme that emerges in this book, it is one that American conservatives will find congenial: the inherent dangers of state power. The more power that accrues to the state, argues Revel, whether in a democracy or in any other political order, the greater the danger to liberty and individual rights. "The more state, the less law," as he puts it.

One can see that Revel is quar-

PATRICK GLYNN *is a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute and the author of* Closing Pandora's Box: Arms Races, Arms Control, and the History of the Cold War *(New Republic Books/Basic Books).*

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reling here with the French Socialists, who have come a long way in the direction of accepting certain conservative insights without forsaking their essential statism. "When intellectuals revise their views, they do not necessarily get to the bottom of their initial error," he writes. It is toward such partial converts that his often polemical line of argument seems mainly directed.

This focus on a European audience explains why American conservative thinkers are likely to find less intellectual nourishment than they might hope for in Revel's central chapters, which for the most part reprise arguments about development, democracy, and economic liberalism that are the familiar fare of the best American conservative writing on the subject. He draws more than once, for example, on the pathbreaking work of Michael Novak on capitalism and democracy, unfamiliar to many European readers but well established as part of the American conservative canon.

The European, and especially French, emphasis may also explain the book's sometimes defensive tone. At the end of the cold war, Revel came in for much criticism, both here and in France, for his excessively pessimistic view of the West's future in *How Democracies Perish*. Like almost everybody else, he failed to foresee the Communist collapse. Unfortunately, his defense of his earlier position is made less persuasive by his unwillingness to forsake the Continental intellectual's pose of omniscience and to acknowledge fallibility.

By refusing to admit error freely, Revel neglects to highlight sufficiently where he was correct. He was wrong about the future, to be sure, but he was all too right about what we needed to do. In general, those who promoted the tough policies that proved successful tended to overestimate Soviet strength, while those who recognized the underlying weaknesses of the Soviet system advocated conciliatory policies which, paradoxically, would have prolonged Communist rule there. Few were those who hit upon the almost magical combination of toughness and optimism about the West's relative power. Fortunately for all of us, Ronald Reagan appears to have been among them.

REVEL'S defense of his cold-war analysis necessitates a revisiting of the Gorbachev years. His explanation of Gorbachev as a Communist naïf seeking an untenable middle ground—reformed Communism or "socialism with a human face"—is plausible enough, and now very current among Western conservatives. But in the end, Revel's portrait of the Communist leader acting rationally on the basis of his empire's interests fails to do justice to what even Andrei Sakharov—who dealt with Gorbachev at close quarters—recognized as the inherent mystery of this contradictory, epochal figure. In particular, Revel's contention that the West's détente "helped Gorbachev lengthen an unacceptable situation" is hard to accept (even if many of us argued the same thing at the time). As Ronald Reagan—and even that arch-enemy of appeasement, Winston Churchill—recognized, toughness, while crucial, sometimes needs to be modulated. Given the potential for violence, would we really have desired the Soviet empire to collapse more quickly or precipitously than it did under Gorbachev? Whether through the hands of men or God, it is hard to imagine a smoother transition from 75 years of brutal totalitarian rule. (The *future* of democracy in Russia, as Revel fully recognizes, is another issue.)

In his last long chapter, Revel is once again at his best, brilliantly cataloguing the forces that continue to threaten contemporary democracy from within. Not the least of these is the simple corruption of public officials, which is apparently even more rampant in Europe than here, and which Revel links, again, to the state's growing control over society's resources.

In the end, amid many familiar, and some tired, arguments, Revel offers enough insight in *Democracy Against Itself* to make it more than worthwhile, a useful stepping-stone on the way to a refreshed vision.

We mourn the death of

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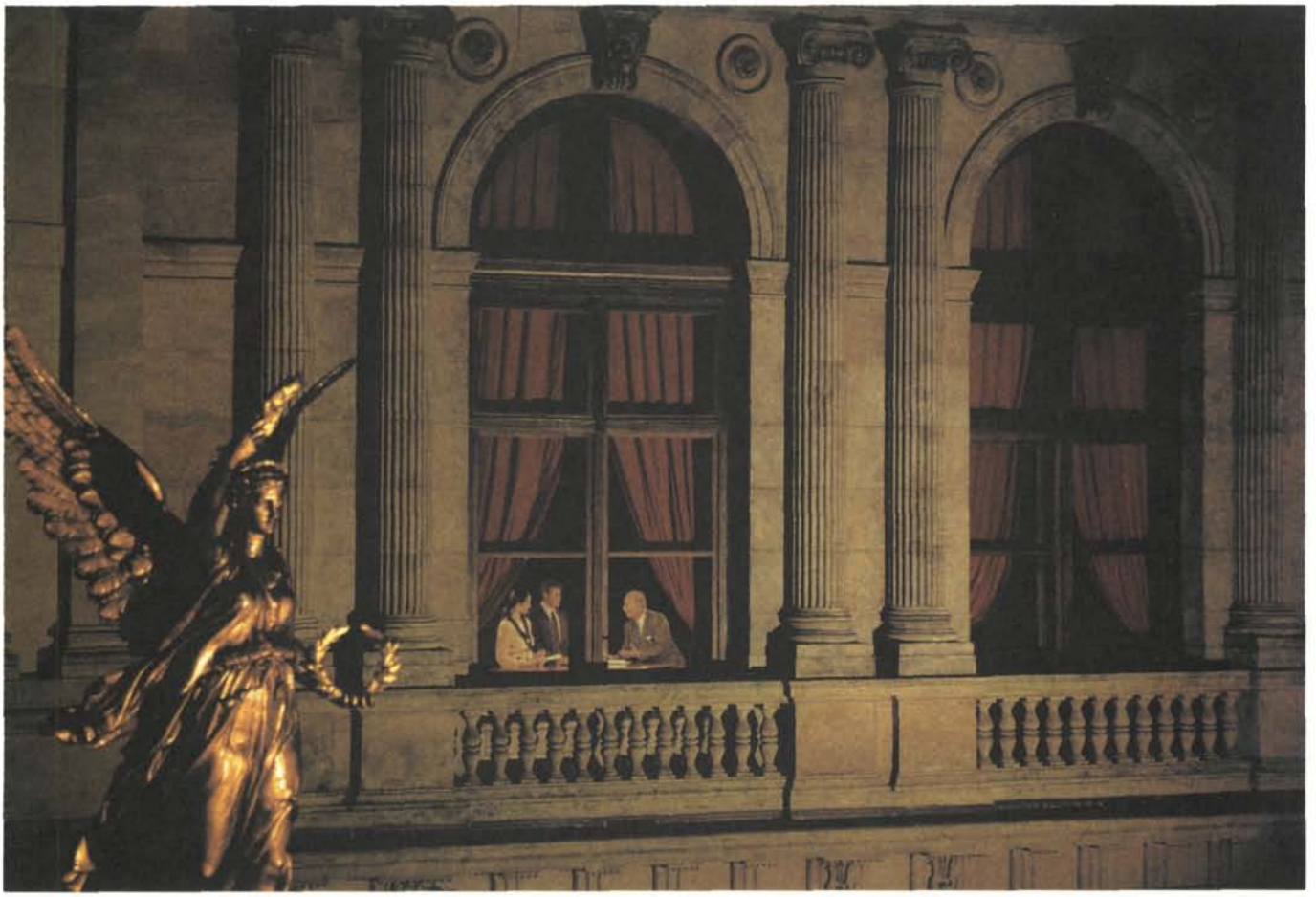

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